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THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 73

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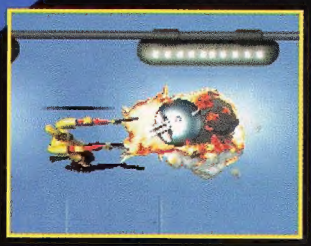

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CONTENTS

Wolverine™ & © 1997 Marvel Characters

ON THE COVER

Wolverine and Co. was illustrated by Carlos Pacheco and Jimmy Palmiotti, and colored by Liquid Graphics. Flip to **page 40** to see who made the list for the Top 10 best superhero designs.

Sin City™ & © 1997 Frank Miller, Inc.

Sin City's Miho (star of the upcoming *Sin City: Family Values*) was illustrated by Frank Miller, and colored by Twilight Graphics. To learn all about the dark and seedy underworld of Sin City, creep to **page 59.**

124

features

Paul Schiraldi

50

65

32 **BOX OFFICE SENSATION**
Bridging the gap between the comics industry and the real world, *Box Office Poison* is smart, sexy and full of laughs. By James Busbee

40 **DRESSED FOR SUCCESS**
Wizard undresses the 10 best superhero designs of all time. By the *Wizard* Staff

50 **THE WIZARD Q&A: MIKE CARLIN**
DC's executive editor reveals his love for his "favorite son" Superman, why Hal Jordan had to die and why the time is right for a new universe of superheroes. By Craig Shutt

59 **SIN CITY CONFIDENTIAL**
Take a peek inside the seedy underworld that is Sin City. By Matthew Brady

special "Spawn" movie section

65 **INTRODUCTION**

66 **THE "SPAWN" SCORECARD**
A rundown on who's who in the "Spawn" movie. By Rob Allstetter

68 **BIG MAC**
Whether it's as executive producer or as an extra on the set of "Spawn," Todd McFarlane commands attention. By Rob Allstetter

74 **MASKED MEN**
Wizard uncovers the secrets behind the many faces of "Spawn." By Rob Allstetter

82 **I WAS A "SPAWN" MOVIE EXTRA**
Or how I got paid $79 a day to look dirty and put oatmeal in my hair. By Jason A. Harter

standards

FROM THE TOP 4
MAGIC WORDS 6
WIZARD NEWS 16
CASTING CALL 36
BASIC TRAINING 86
JUNK DRAWER 90
TOY CHEST 94
ACTION FIGURE PRICE GUIDE 98
HOMEMADE HEROES 108
PALMER'S PICKS 112
THE SKINNY 114
PICKS 118
TRAILER PARK 126
CHARACTER PROFILE 132
MANGA SCENE 136
CARD MARKET 138
CARD PRICE GUIDE 140
TOP 10 COMICS 144
MARKET WATCH 146
TOP 100 148
INTRO TO THE PRICE GUIDE 149
COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE 152
SHOWS & CONVENTIONS 198
MISC. STUFF 201
CBIQ 202
CROSSWORD PUZZLE 203
TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS 204
BULLPEN 206
WIZARD PROFILE 208

contests

84 **SPAWN**
Win an authentic Spawn shovel movie prop from the "Spawn" movie and tons o' other Spawny goodies!

110 **SIN CITY**
Come up with the most original cause of death in Sin City, and win yourself an ultra-rare prototype of Dark Horse's Marv bust!

124 **RESURRECTION MAN**
Come up with the coolest superpower that Resurrection Man could possess and win original artwork featuring him using that power!

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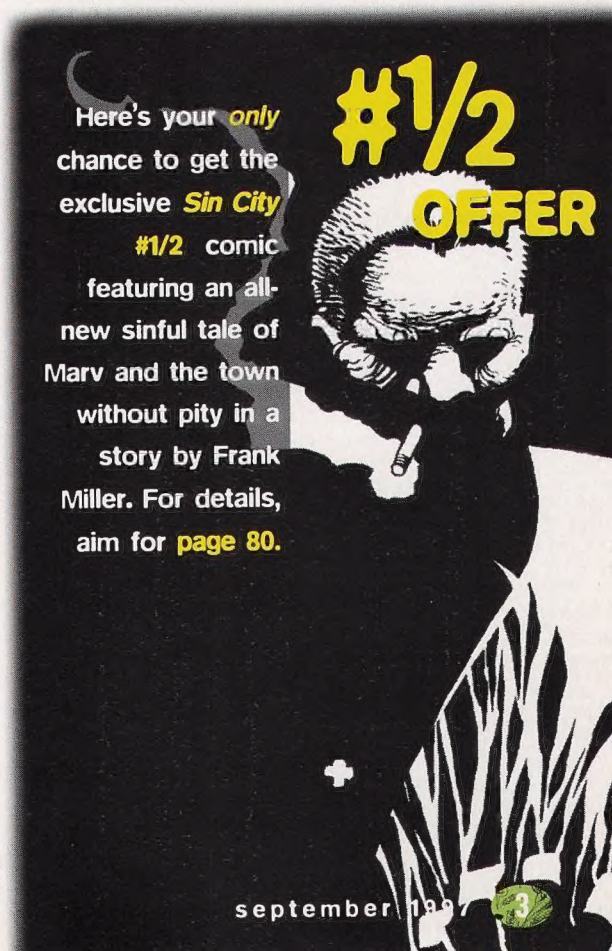

Here's your *only* chance to get the exclusive *Sin City* #1/2 comic featuring an all-new sinful tale of Marv and the town without pity in a story by Frank Miller. For details, aim for **page 80.**

"HEE HEE, THAT TICKLES!"

Photo: Fred Pierce

MULTIMEDIA COMICS

This is a big summer for comic books in the entertainment world. We've got "Spawn" on HBO, and in the movies, "Men in Black," based on a Malibu comic, a new Batman movie, and tons of other properties optioned or in development. And that's not to mention all the toys and video games coming out based on comic book characters. It's overwhelming, but it's great. It's a chance for many to see what we've enjoyed about comic books as far back as we can remember.

So far, the results have been great. "Spawn" is beating HBO's highest projection for ratings and New Line is going guns a-blazing to hype the movie, adding millions to the special effects budget at the last minute. "Men in Black," which I had the opportunity to preview almost a month early (thanks to Scott Rosenberg, former Malibu comics owner and Marvel exec), was a lot of fun. Thanks to DC, I had a chance to see the screening for "Batman and Robin," but I'll be in Atlanta—thanks anyway, Patty! I guess I'll have to pay to see "Batman."

Now, I'm off to E3 down in Atlanta to check out the latest and greatest in video and computer games. Talk about a fun job...

This month we have an awesome 16 pages on the "Spawn" movie. Make sure you go see it—I can't wait. We've also done something really cool this month with our cover. It ties directly into an editorial feature where we rate the Top 10 best superhero costumes, and we get to have some fun with it—you decide which costumes you like the best. Let us know how we did, and, of course, who we forgot. We've also got an underground look at the world of Sin City, a Q&A with DC's big gun Mike Carlin and lots of other great stuff.

Darkchylde is on our Chromium Card this month. We've had a lot of mail about her and her creator Randy Queen.

The *Sin City* #1/2 is one of the best #1/2 offers we've ever done. Frank Miller has done a tremendous job—make sure you get yourself one.

This month we have an *X-Files* #1 ACE Edition with a really cool acetate cover. Make sure you ask your retailer for it.

So there you have it, a great month of *Wizard*.

See ya,

Gareb S. Shamus

P.S. What did ya think of the new *ToyFare*?

ABC AUDITED

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Wolverine & Co. Cover Art Carlos Pacheco and Jimmy Palmiotti, colored by Liquid Graphics
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WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS, volume one, seventy-three (73), September 1997.

Please direct all editorial-related inquiries to Wizard Editorial Dept., 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064 (or Fax: 914-268-0053). Please direct all subscription-related inquiries to Wizard Subscription Dept., PO Box 658, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598. One-year subscription rate is $29.95 (Canada $48.00, all other countries $70.00). All payments in U.S. funds only.

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WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS (ISSN 1065-6499) is published monthly by Gareb Shamus Enterprises Inc., D.B.A. Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave., Congers, NY 10920-2064. Periodical postage paid at Congers, NY and additional mailing offices. Additional Standard (A) Postage paid on enclosures. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to **WIZARD PRESS**, PO Box 658, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.

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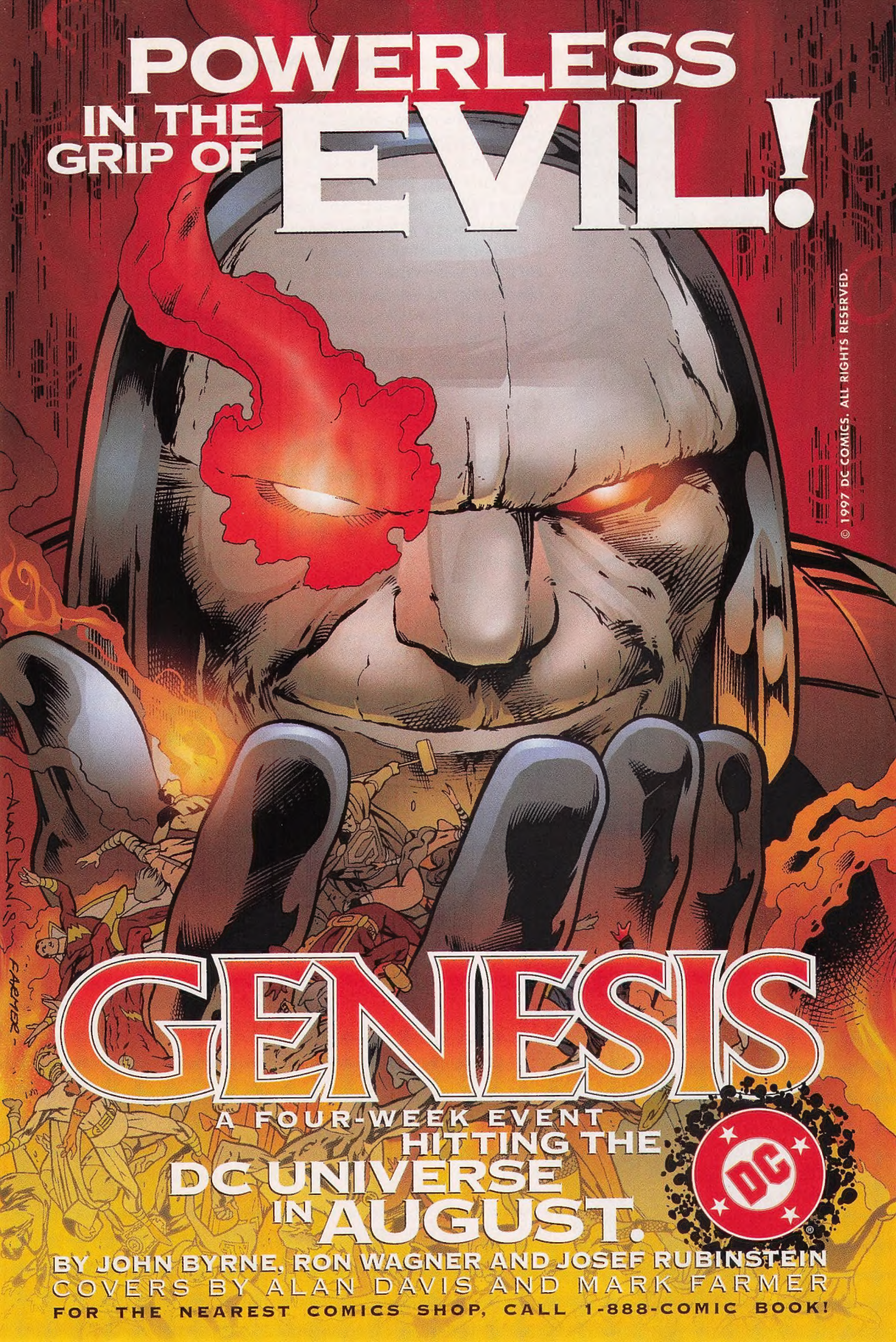
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MAGIC WORDS

Naked, Naked, Naked!

Whoa, Nellie! We got an absolutely massive-ass response to "Last Man Standing," the ranking of the 10 toughest heroes we ran in *Wizard* #70. Most everyone liked the article, and most everyone agreed that the Silver Surfer, our choice for baddest boy of the hero block, was indeed king of the heap. Most everyone also disagreed with various choices of ours for the heroes ranked from #2 through #10.

And then you've got Beau Smith. Beau's an...*opinionated* fella who's a sales and marketing goombah for Todd McFarlane Productions. He's also been known to write a comic or two, like the recent *Batman/Wildcat* mini-series he co-penned with Chuck Dixon. He's also got a set of ideas all his own. We'll let you sample the wisdom of Beau in the leadoff hole.

And oh, yeah. What's with that "naked" headline? Well, it'll take us a few pages to get naked, but you'll notice that by the time we get to the end of this column, the last three letters share a common theme. You crazy kids. Get yer minds outta the gutter already!

Dear Wizard,

I just read "Last Man Standing" in *Wizard* #70. Let me give you my thoughts, speaking as a Real Man:

Your subtitle "*Wizard* Ranks the Toughest Superheroes in Comics" was a poor one. The word "toughest" should not have been there. It has nothing to do with the article. You listed the most powerful heroes, but not the toughest. There's a big difference.

Superpowers don't always mean someone's super-tough. If you're gonna list the toughest, you've got to list the heroes who've got that down-'n'-dirty, blood-'n'-guts, spit-nails and don't-you-curse-my-dog attitude and bring it to every fight they're in, whether the bad guy is Galactus or the Weather Wizard.

My biggest complaint about your list was the fact that Silver Surfer was number one. There's no way. He's too neurotic, and too much of a tree-hugger to make tough decisions when the wall is comin' down. Superman? Bad choice. The guy can't even control his wife. Lois should have been there ahead of him. The Flash? He's not a fighter. He's a hero with a gimmick. Professor X, Firestorm and Dr. Strange? Come on. I'm not even gonna waste words on them.

Like I said, the problem is that you named this article wrongly. If you want a quick list of heroes that are really the toughest, I'll give you one. In no particular order:

1) The Thing. Ben Grimm is as tough as his hide. You'd have to kill him before he'd give up. The boy has a rhino heart.

2) Guy Gardner, Warrior. Yeah, so I used to write him. With or without powers, Guy is the John Wayne of the superhero world.

3) Nick Fury. He's whupped Nazis, commie spies, and half of the supervillains in the Marvel Universe. His beard stubble is tougher than all the Avengers put together.

4) Wolverine. Only Fury is close to him in the tough department. Ol' Logan's got the soul of a wild animal.

5) Wonder Woman. Well, ya got one right.

6) Savage Dragon. Nobody can bleed, get knifed or get shot better than the Dragon. He's durable. You'd have to nuke this boy to put him out.

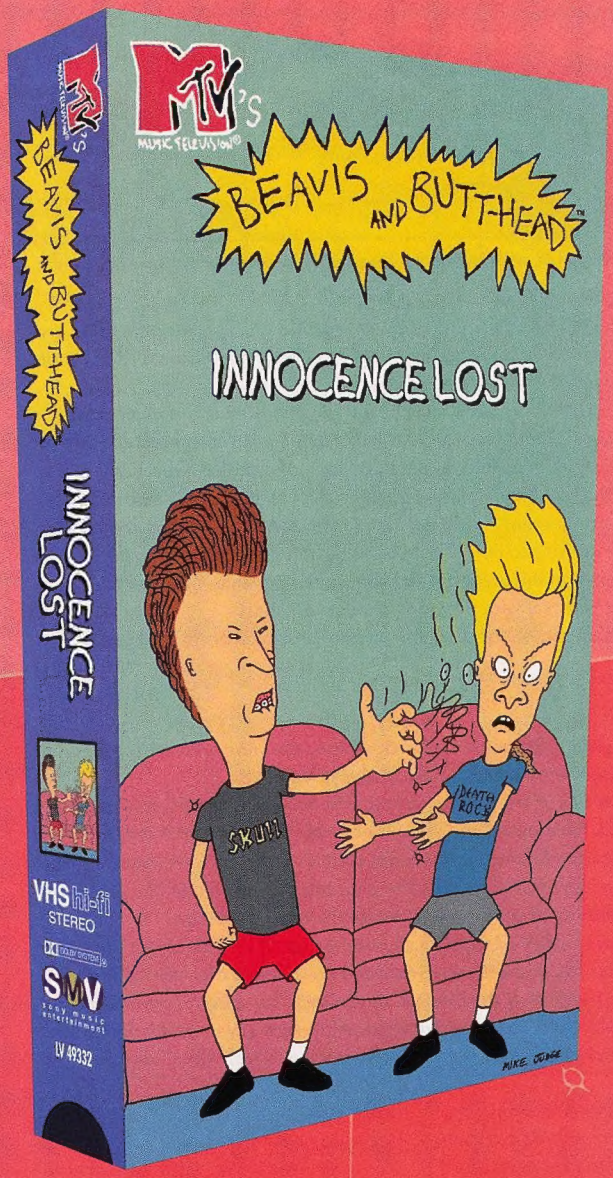
7) Hawkman. The original one. Big, strong, silent type. The cop from outer space.

8) Batman. His idea of a hobby is to stick himself with a knife to see how long he can stand the pain. He's the G. Gordon Liddy of heroes.

9) Wynonna Earp. Oh, yeah. Uh...I write her too, don't I?

10) Captain America. If I have to tell you why he's one of the toughest, then you shouldn't be reading this.

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS



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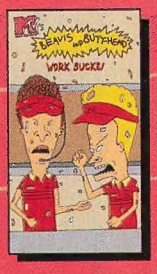

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Anyway, that's the deal. You named your article wrong and now I've made you pay for it by havin' you read my letter. That's your first lesson on how to be a tough guy. Next time you want to do a real article on the toughest superheroes in comics, call me and let me do it for you.

Now gimme your milk money!

Beau Smith
Todd McFarlane Productions

Wynonna Earp? I mean, Wynonna Friggin' Earp?

Beau does bring up a decent point. Our article featured the true powerhouses of comics, not necessarily the ones who were the most rugged and tenacious. Beau did a good job of listing the true warriors, but I'll tell ya one thing: In a good ol' fashioned, knockdown, drag-out, I'd take the Wizard list over Beau's list any day.

After all, he's got Wynonna Earp on his squad. Sheesh. Just goes ta show ya, folks: It takes all kinds.

Jim:

Just wanted to drop you a letter with regards to "Last Man Standing" in *Wizard* #70. When I saw that it was a ranking of the toughest heroes in comics, I thought for sure that self-promoting shell-of-a-man Beau Smith would have wedged at least one of his lame characters into the lineup. That you blackballed his butt out of there gives me newfound respect for your magazine. Keep up the good work, and keep Beau Smith out of *Wizard*.

Lou Bank
VP, Sales and Marketing
Dark Horse Comics

Oopsie.

Dear Jim,

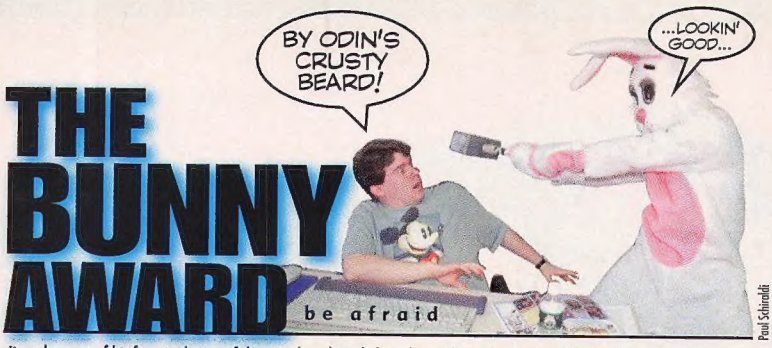
In the *Titans: Scissors, Paper, Stone* one-shot, the cover shows main character Witchy-Poo throwing around some energy that has a Japanese symbol in the middle. She also speaks Japanese in the comic before casting a spell. What's that symbol and what the heck is she saying?

Gabriel Ramos
San Juan Bautista, CA

According to American manga master Adam Warren, the writer and artist of* Scissors, Paper, Stone, *"The symbol is the Japanese symbol 'shi,' the same as that bad girl's name. It means 'death' when translated into English." Most of the Japanese language in the book itself has no particular meaning. Warren says, "It's just a bunch of words thrown together for effect. The Japanese often do the same when they put an American sign written in English in a background. It's just nonsense words thrown together, and this was kind of my tribute to what they do."

THE BUNNY AWARD

be afraid



Paul Schinaldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this, nor is there a prize.

Mr. McLauchlin,

As a longtime comic collector, I am all too aware what my chances with the ladies are. But after some profound luck, I've actually come into a position to become romantically involved with a member of the opposite gender.

But like in every good story, there must be a villain. In my case, this villain comes in a decidedly hideous form. By employing the use of various mind games and all forms of treachery, he somehow wormed his way into a position of extreme favor in the eyes of the object of my affection. When confronted regarding this matter, he responded in a most disturbing fashion, claiming, "I own her. She's mine and I'll do anything to keep her, even if it means blatantly lying to her." Prior to this horrific event, I thought dialogue like this could only be found on the pages of a Batman comic. Which brings me to my question: How would Batman deal with this most devious of fiends?

I'm in over my head, and only the wisdom of Batman can untangle this mess.

Lee Erickson
La Crosse, WI

Then we'll go straight to the source: Chuck Dixon, the man who writes Batman every month in* Detective Comics. *Take it away, Chuck...

"This guy sounds like a world-class creep. But follow Batman's example and don't sink to his level. No matter how devious or lowdown his enemies are, the Dark Knight sticks to his code of morals and always comes out on top. He usually allows the bad guys to trip themselves up. It's the character flaws within the Joker, the Riddler and Bane that wind up putting them back in the slammer.

"Liars always have a way of tripping themselves up. If all this clown does is lie through his teeth, and you just keep your cool and be yourself, then the lady in question is bound to see the truth. If she doesn't, then maybe she wasn't for you after all.

"One other thought, though: Maybe Batman isn't the right guy to ask for dating tips."

Maybe not, Chuck. But he's more interesting than "Dear Abby" any day.

Dear Jim McLauchlin,

Hey! I was under the impression that Swamp Thing and Animal Man were Vertigo characters. But they're suddenly showing up in *Aquaman*, a DC Universe title. Does this mean that the DCU and the Vertigo universe are the same? If it is, can Preacher tell Superman to "Go @*!& yourself!," and Superman would have to do his best Sheriff Root impression?

Rusty Rittenhouse
Athens, OH
ae442@seorf.ohiou.edu

Not exactly. According to Karen Berger, executive editor of the Vertigo line, "The DCU and Vertigo do not share the same universe. But there are certain characters that can comfortably fit in specific books in both lines, and the editors of those books coordinate that stuff appropriately. And for your information, Vertigo

creator-owned books like **Preacher** *stand by themselves, and do not even connect to other Vertigo titles."*

Hello,

In comics today, there are many characters associated with World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. As time goes on, what will happen to the origins of our characters? I mean, come the year 2000, will Tony Stark have met a soldier named Jim Rhodes in Desert Storm instead of Vietnam?

Allen Transier
Osgood, IN

Probably. In fact, things like this are already happening. Marvel's Mr. Fantastic and Thing once had a history that included army service in World War II. When Fantastic Four #1 came out in 1961, The Big One had occurred only 16 years ago. It made sense to make Reed and Ben WWII vets. But that is the case no longer. The FF members' WWII history has been written out of their past.

Dear Wizard,

Can you please list Ian Churchill's and Carlos Pacheco's work?

Mel Semper
Covina, CA
RSemper818@aol.com

Sure.

Ian Churchill drew the Deadpool mini-series for Marvel in 1994 and followed that up with a sporadic run on Cable that included 14 issues between #20 and #39. He recently penciled the "Heroes Reborn" Avengers (#4-#7) and launches The Coven, a creator-owned four-issue mini-series from Awesome Entertainment, in August.

Comics produced for an English-speaking audience by the Spanish-speaking artist Carlos Pacheco include four issues of Flash (#93-#94, #99-#100) for DC Comics, and the Bishop, Starjammers and X-Universe mini-series for

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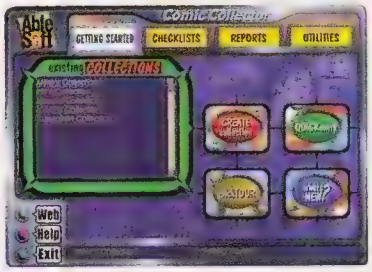

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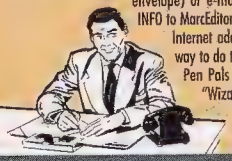

PEN PALS

Shanna Clark
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Sean McDermott
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Tallahassee, FL 32308
Likes: *Shi, The X-Files, most Image titles*

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Likes: *X-Men, Hulk, Wolverine*

Mark Braehler
Age: 25 Sex: Male
Unit 6-31, Mt. Pleasant Rd.
Nunawadine Vil. 3131, Australia
Likes: *Wolverine, Ghost Rider, manga*

Kevin Perdue
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Likes: *Gen13, Dawn, Vampirella*

Stacey Ann Reynolds
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Ravenel, SC 29470
Likes: *X-titles, Shi, Lady Death*

Tim Rhoads
Age: 19 Sex: Male
P.O. Box 482
Dahlgren, VA 22448
Likes: *Shi, Japanimation, drawing comics*

not done yet...

Marvel Comics. Pacheco is more famous for his runs on Fantastic Four *(#415-#416) and* X-Men *(#62 to present). He's also got some unpublished work to his credit. "The first thing I ever did for Marvel," he says, "was a* Dark Guard *six-issue mini-series for their United Kingdom operation. But only the first four issues were published before the plug was pulled on Marvel UK. The rest never made it out."*

Dear Wizard,

Those who want a good laugh should check out some early issues of Marvel's parody title *What The?!* In addition to some hilarious stories, take a close look at who did the art: Jon Bogdanove, Steve Ditko, Erik Larsen, Larry Stroman, Whilce Portacio, John Byrne, Dale Keown, Joe Quesada and Jim Lee. Heck, I even found a story written and drawn by (Are you ready for this?) Scott Lobdell of X-Men fame! My question is: Were these guys looking to do these stories or were they asked to work for *What The?!*

Chad Wm. Porter
Weston, Ontario, Canada

A little of both. According to Lobdell, "The editors did a great job of getting top talent on the books in the early days, but it degenerated after a while. By the later issues, if you delivered a pizza to Marvel and could hold a pencil, you could do a What The?! *story."*

And any completists out there looking for Scott Lobdell's art need look no further than the "Obscurity Legion" story in What The?! *#9.*

Dear Wizard,

Why am I not able to get a subscription to Gen13? I have looked in all the Gen13 comics I've got and haven't found a subscription ad or anything! Is there any way I can get a subscription?

Rick Buswell
Caryville, FL

Says Jeff Mariotte, big marketing Kahuna at WildStorm Productions, the company that publishes Gen13, "We believe that offering subscriptions would take money out of the pockets of comic book stores. Most stores are willing to pull and hold comics that you specifically reserve, and there are some good mail-order companies from which you can order if there are no comic stores in your neighborhood. We recommend you 'subscribe' to Gen13 in one of those ways."

Dear Jim,

I unload trailers for a living at Wal-Mart Super Center #734. My retail job demands that I ask the following question: Does Santa rule the North Pole with an iron fist?

Tommy Ahr Jr.
Daleville, AL

I once worked retail myself. I feel for you, my brother-man. The answer to your question goes like this:

Santa is The Man. He oppresses our pointy-eared proletarian brothers and tries to crush them under his jackbooted heel. All the while, his propaganda machine cranks out a squeaky-clean image to the duped masses. A righteous elf should throw his wooden shoes into the toy-making machinery, seize the means of production and kick that fat boy's bloated ass in the ocean. After all, it is the elves who do all the work. Why should they not be rewarded? The message is clear: Organize, or live as a pawn of The Man forever! Power to the people! Solidarity forever! The union makes us strong!

Hot damn, I'm worked up! Which way to Shamus' office?

Dear Wizard,

Are there any more Cyberfrog stories coming soon? What about merchandise?

Peter Allen
Espanola, Ontario, Canada

Cyberfrog stories will be coming at you with greater frequency this fall, when Cyberfrog becomes a monthly, gearing up from its previous...erratic publishing schedule. Cybercreator Ethan Van Sciver also says that Cyberfrog merchandise is in the works, although no product deals have been finalized yet.

Dear Jimmy-Poo,

1) Your magazine has two different covers. Is this a "direct market/newsstand" thing or a "variant cover" thing?

2) If you went into a store wearing shoes and a shirt, but no pants, would you still get service? Those signs say nothing about pants!

Nikki "Nixter" Davis
Baraboo, WI

1) It's both. Or neither. Your choice. Basically, we like to run covers once in a while—like the Preacher cover on Wizard *#71, f'r instance—that are not recognizable to the more general newsstand audience. The newsstand responds well to Batman and Spider-Man 'n' stuff, but probably wouldn't recognize Preacher if he popped up in their soup. Still, Preacher is pretty darned cool and we know that the comic shop crowd will respond well to Preacher. So we do a Batman cover for the newsstand for* Wizard *#71 and let comic shops order their choice of Batman or Preacher covers.*

2) You sound like someone who's been arrested at least once.

Two asides: 1) Baraboo is the home of the Circus World Museum, a great tribute to traveling circuses throughout American history. If any of you are in the neighborhood, I highly recommend

PENPALS

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The Crow, Vampirella, Wolverine

Bryant Lenoir, 21/m
ace lenoir@aol.com
X-Men, Fantastic Four, Wolverine

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BACK TO HELL...

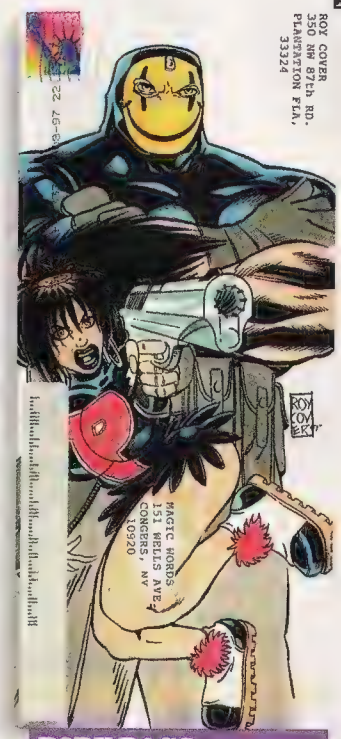
LETTER ART

Fans who got their letter art printed this month will each receive two issues of *X-Force* autographed by Adam Pollina, plus a copy of this issue of *Wizard* signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff! The creator of the best envelope wins an *X-Force* sketch by Pollina, plus the comics and signed issue! (Thanks for the stuff, Adam!) Artists: Please include a clearly printed return address and **a list of characters depicted** on the **back** of your envelope.

THE PRIZE

envelope of the month

FAIRCHILD
Arne Ratermanis
San Diego, CA



BODY BAGS
Roy Cover
Plantation, FL

BATMAN & THE JOKER
Herminio Lugo, Jr.
The Bronx, NY

CYAN'S TOYS Phillip Quaglino Metairie, LA

you check it out; and 2) Don't call me "Jimmy-Poo."

Dear Wizard,

1) If the spandex suits that super-characters wear show every crevice of the bicep and each muscle of the abdomen, why don't they show underwear lines? Or do heroes "go commando" while saving the universe?

2) Most importantly, why in the heck aren't there any nipples on the Batgirl costume in the new "Batman and Robin" movie? Both the male heroes show theirs.

Tyler Freidenrich
Irvine, CA

1) Would somebody please explain to me what the hell "going commando" is and where that term came from?

2) Methinks the movie would go straight from PG-13 to NC-17 in no time flat.

Dear Jimbo,

Do you sleep in the buff?

Art Bukowski
Grosse Pointe Park, MI

There really is a Grosse Pointe Park? Like in the movie?

Anyhoo, I sleep in the buff only when it's really hot or when I have a good reason to do so. Geez, it's been a while since I've had a real good reason to do so. Maybe I'll go find one.

That must be my cue. Until next month, I remain...

—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin is the best there is at what he does! Only problem is, all he does is get loaded and act like an ass.

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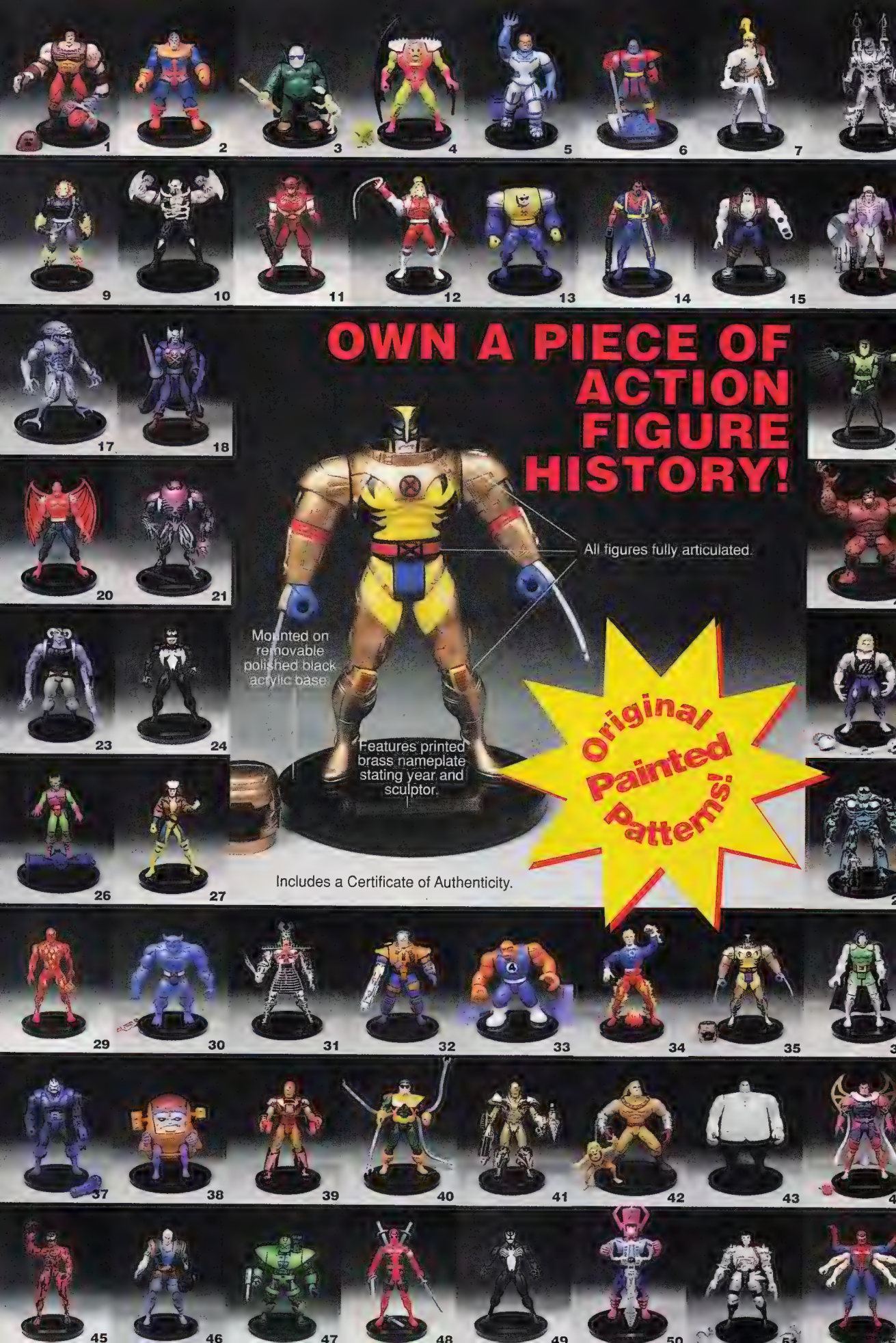
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LOBDELL, MADUREIRA TO LEAVE X-TITLES

Creative shuffle as Marvel shakes up X-Universe

The domino effect is in full force at Marvel Comics.

Scott Lobdell, writer of two of today's best-selling comics—***X-Men*** and ***Uncanny X-Men***—is giving up the coveted X-titles. **Joe Madureira**, the hyper-popular penciler of *Uncanny*, is leaving in tandem with Lobdell. And the fallout from these maneuvers will restructure creative teams all across the X-Universe.

Marvel has announced that **Joe Kelly** (*Deadpool*) signs on as *X-Men* scribe with #70, shipping in October, while **Carlos Pacheco** remains on as *X-Men* penciler. A full writer/artist switch will then take place on *Uncanny X-Men* after October's #350, Lobdell and Madureira's last issue. **Chris Bachalo** (*Generation X*) has been tapped as the new *Uncanny* penciler, tentatively slated to begin his run with issue #352. No writer for *Uncanny* has been announced yet.

The reason for Madureira's departure is simple.

"To be honest, I don't know if I can do anything else with the X-Men in the next few years," he said. "I don't love the characters like I did when I started. I have to challenge myself with something that excites me a bit more. I don't think I'm doing my best work on *Uncanny* any more, so it's better to move on. I'm looking to do a new creator-owned project, probably in late '97 or early '98."

Lobdell is leaving the X-books to take on the writing chores of Marvel's *Fantastic Four* when the title returns from the "Heroes Reborn" alternate universe in November. He says he wants to "concentrate on the FF characters and build a franchise there. I've been writing X-Men for seven years and it's just time to move. Personally, I think the books have been really good lately and I want to go out on a high note. *Uncanny* #350 is a major turning point, and it should make for a good jumping-off point and a good start for the next guy."

To clear his schedule in preparation for *Fantastic Four*, Lobdell has already signed off as writer of *Generation X* (James Robinson has been filling in with a planned four-issue stint). Lobdell's departure leads to **Larry Hama** (current *Wolverine* writer) taking over as *Generation X* writer, with October's issue #33. Then, **Steven T. Seagle** (*Alpha Flight*) becomes the regular *Wolverine* writer with either November's #120 or December's #121.

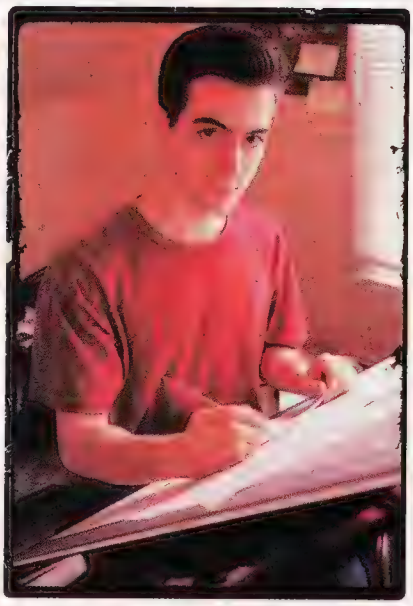


Photo: Gabe Palacio

Lobdell (below) and Madureira are concentrating on other projects this fall.

All these changes result in a bevy of new opportunities, particularly for Kelly, who's been generating a lot of fan interest with runs on Marvel's *Deadpool* and *Daredevil*. But while Lobdell wrote both X-titles, Kelly will write just one.

"My understanding is that they want two different voices on the X-Men now," Kelly said. "And I'm still kind of the new kid. I think they'll find someone more established for *Uncanny*." Still, Kelly is jazzed for his new assignment. "It's exciting," he said, "but I still don't really know why I'm here. [Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Bob Harras just asked if I would be interested. There was an X-Men writer conference that I sat in on to put in my two cents' worth, because Deadpool is on the periphery of the X-Universe. We had a lot of good discussions there, and I guess that helped me."

Kelly has been plotting out the

New X-writer Kelly promises more focus on new members like Maggot (left) and Dr. Reyes.

future of *X-Men* and promises a stronger focus on newer characters like **Maggot**, **Dr. Reyes**, **Joseph** and **Marrow**. Beyond that, he says, "my general plan is to focus more on character conflict than crazy fights. That's where my interest lies. I want to bring in humor, which I think is one of my stronger points. Hopefully, I'm going to maintain a roller-coaster ride. Whether that means crazy action from one page to the next or an intense soap opera, I don't know yet."

X-fans should get a fair amount of action and soap opera both, as the X-Men will have to deal with the loss of all their possessions after Bastion's takeover of their mansion in "Zero Tolerance" and the "Trial of Gambit," where the X-Men confront the Cajun mutant about his dark past, slated as *Uncanny* #350's turning point.

Meanwhile, Larry Hama is looking forward to ending a seven-year run on *Wolverine* and, hopefully, shedding his typecast image as a writer who only does tough guys.

"It's sort of a relief to move on and demonstrate that you can write something else," Hama said. "I spent 14 years on *G.I. Joe* before I could convince an editor I could do something other than military stories, so writing the Gen X team should be a good change."

Hama is still learning the characters, but is sure that he wants *Generation X* to be tighter. "I like to have things tied up. What needs to be done with this title is smaller stories, maybe only two or three issues in length," he said. "And more than anything, this team needs a strong reason to be around. The book has just been a strange breakdown of character interplay. I'm going to give them a mission."

And while Steven Seagle is flattered to be asked to take over Hama's old *Wolverine* job, he's approaching it with a bit of caution.

"It's a prize assignment, and I was *floored* that Harras would offer it to me, since I've only done one real job at Marvel, and that's *Alpha Flight*," said Seagle. "Because I'm very committed to my work on Vertigo's *House of Secrets* and *Sandman Mystery Theatre* as well as the relaunch of *Alpha*, I told Bob I was worried about trying to fit a fourth monthly into my schedule. The solution we came up with is for me to write one story arc of *Wolverine* as a trial run. If I can manage it without my other work suffering, and also do some good for Wolvie, then we'll talk about whether I should continue as regular writer."

Seagle is currently immersing himself in the character, but may very well be looking to bring big changes to the title quickly. "I'm still reading the old issues and I'm going to read the entire run before I start," he said. "But one aspect I'm concerned with is the question of adamantium and the return to the old Wolverine we've come to know. I'm interested in addressing that if Marvel is interested in letting me address it."

■ *Jim McLauchlin & Matthew Senreich*

"Call me 'Pebbles,' will ya?!?" roared self-conscious, tight-briefed behemoth. "Before those damn cosmic rays hit me I was this &%$#ing big!!"

George Clooney and Arnold Schwarzenegger spotted at premiere of "Batman & Robin." "Man, those ILM guys should win an Oscar for making those old has-beens look so good on screen," commented startled fan before being squeezed by Joel Schumacher.

Generously endowed dog forced to cover his privates. "'Twas ne er a regular poochie," commented badly stereotypical Scottish neighbor. "'Twas a wild-eyed devil-beast with an insatiable appetite an' an eye t' me wee midget wife!"

ahead

JIM LEE'S NEW MARVEL BOOKS!

TIA CARRERE AS SHI!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

Lee's 'Heroes Reborn' Tenure Extended to 13 Issues

Jim Lee is finding the number 13 a lucky one.

The 12-issue "Heroes Reborn" deal that gave former Marvel artist Lee creative control over Marvel titles *Avengers*, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four* and *Iron Man* has been extended for a 13th month.

"I think Marvel wanted to give themselves more time to work on the whole 'Heroes Return' storyline," said Lee. "And since their *Heroes Return* mini-series isn't coming out until October, I think they saw a gap in their publishing schedule."

Mike Wieringo (above) will draw *Fantastic Four #13*.

The 13th issues are scheduled to hit stands in four consecutive weeks throughout September, with all four written by **James Robinson** (*Starman*, *Cable*). Mike Ryan continues penciling *Avengers*, while Ron Lim (*Silver Surfer*) pencils *Captain America*, Mike Wieringo (*Sensational Spider-Man*) pencils *Fantastic Four*, and Larry Stroman (*X-Factor*) takes on *Iron Man*.

The only problem for Lee? How to follow a massive "Heroes Reborn" Galactus-battle crossover story that gets tied up neatly in the #12 issues.

"How do you top all the heroes battling Galactus?" Lee asked. "We didn't want to lessen the impact of that by having the heroes battle someone else who was going to destroy the world the month after. So the story in the #13s will be completely different."

The 13th issues will deal with the ramifications of a rift in the Negative Zone, as it reshapes the "Heroes Reborn" Marvel Universe and the WildStorm Universe into a single shared universe. "The take is that the Negative Zone has shuffled the two universes together and this is what you get. We won't have amalgamated characters, but rather members of both universes existing together as if they always have. It's kind of a pocket universe within a pocket universe."

So when the 13th issues finally come to a close, what will happen to this brand-new pocket-pocket universe? "As far as I know, there are no plans to destroy it," said Lee. "Since it won't have an impact on the 'Heroes Return' storyline, it's being set up so it can possibly be revisited in the future." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Jim Lee's Marvel Universe Stable Grows

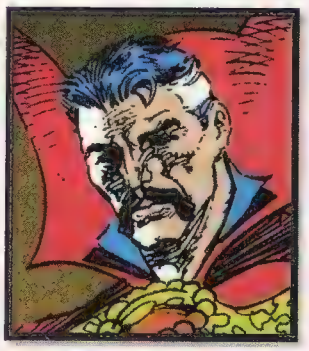
Jim Lee's corner of the Marvel Universe is growing. Last month, *Wizard* reported that Lee would be overseeing three launches of old Marvel characters in new titles—***Defenders***, ***Dr. Strange*** and ***Nick Fury***. The list is now at four titles, with the addition of ***Punisher*** and may grow even more.

Lee, who says he will act in an "executive producer" role to conceptualize ideas and hire creators to carry them out, is acting within the confines of a decidedly non-"Heroes Reborn" plan. The books will take place in the one-and-only unified Marvel Universe, but Lee still plans to shake things up.

"I've been toying with the idea of doing a female Punisher," Lee said. And that's just the tip of the iceberg in terms of things Lee is going to change. Remember when the Punisher killed Nick Fury? Well, there's more to it.

"Nick Fury faked his death, and the Punisher was in on it," Lee said. "That's part of the reason that Frank Castle is no longer the Punisher."

According to Lee, Fury faked his death to go underground and prepare S.H.I.E.L.D. to take on larger, perhaps extraterrestrial, threats.



Dr. Strange **is but one title Lee will take over.**

The plan is for these and many other changes to start in November with the launch of *Dr. Strange* and *Nick Fury*. Then, said Lee, "*Fury* will lead into the new *Punisher*, and *Strange* will lead into the formation of *Defenders*, both of which should start in December."

Creative teams are not in place yet for any of the new launches, with Lee saying that he's in the process of "still scouting out or nailing down creators" for all the projects. But he also said that one thing is clear in his mind: the lineup for *The Defenders*.

"They'll be a Defenders that are very traditional, that people are used to seeing," said Lee. The group is slated to revolve around **Dr. Strange**, **Namor** and the **Hulk**, with **Silver Surfer**, **Valkyrie** and **Ghost Rider** also showing up. So might this lead to Lee taking on a *Ghost Rider* title? "They [Marvel] don't want me talking about that yet, so I won't," said Lee. "But he will be part of *The Defenders*, so we'll see." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

BUZZ BOX

The inside scoop on the comic industry

• **Welcome to the X-LA!** Word on the street is that Marvel and DC Comics are planning an X-Men/JLA crossover project for late '97. Rumored artist? None other than *Uncanny X-Men*'s Joe Madureira. It may well be his swan song with the characters. (See lead news item).

• **Speaking of Madureira...** The artist said he'll be moving on to a creator-owned project. The only question is, where? Buzz hears that WildStorm Productions is Madureira's early favorite.

• **Artist Reborn?** Well-placed spies tell us that Alan Davis, the man penciling the "Heroes Return" *Fantastic Four*, may only be on the title for a three-issue stint. Marvel Comics has no comment nor any word on potential artists for issues #4 forward.

• **Lobdell Does His Thing!** Scott Lobdell is writing the "Heroes Return" *Fantastic Four* and may want to consolidate his hold on the FF franchise by bringing back *Marvel Two-in-One*, a team-up title starring the ever-lovin' blue-eyed Thing. No official word has come from Marvel as of yet.

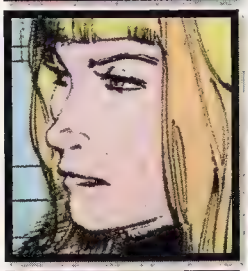
• **The Return of the Legend?** Maybe. After a two-decade hiatus, Buzz hears that Jim Steranko, the man responsible for bringing the cinematic approach to comics with his work on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, may return to comics with a 1998 project published by Image.

• **New Address for Astro City?** It's possible. Word is that DC Comics is so in love with Kurt Busiek's *Astro City* that the company has a standing offer on the table to publish the title should Busiek ever decide to leave Homage Comics. No word yet on any change-of-address forms.

CORRECTION!

Oops! We incorrectly reported in *Wizard #71*'s "Summer Sizzlers" feature that *The Darkness #7* had seven variant covers. It in fact has only one cover.

'NEW MUTANTS' FOCUSES ON PAST AND PRESENT



Meet the New Mutants. Same as the old mutants?

Not exactly, but close. In a four-issue Marvel Comics mini-series beginning in September, writer Ben Raab (*Excalibur*) and artist **Bernard Chang** (*Daredevil/Deadpool '97*) bring us a tale of New Mutants both past and present.

The story begins in the past, as most of the original New Mutants—a team of young superheroes training to be X-Men—get into a game of "truth or dare" one rainy night that gets way out of hand. New Mutant **Illyana** (a.k.a. Magik) opens a window to the future and dares her teammates to look at their futures selves.

"This takes place after Illyana comes back from limbo in *New Mutants* #14 [published in 1984]," said Raab. "She's learned how to travel time. But when the team looks at the future, they discover that not all of them are there." Specifically, Illyana is dead, having succumbed to the Legacy virus in *Uncanny X-Men* #303 (1993). "So the rest of the team sets about moving to change things," said Raab. New Mutants **Cannonball**, **Mirage**, **Sunspot**, **Wolfsbane** and **Cypher** jump into the future (a.k.a. the present-day Marvel Universe) to change history.

When they arrive, they land plop in the middle of a gathering where their future selves are having a New Mutants reunion. The former New Mutants, now members of X-Force and Excalibur, are a bit surprised to see their younger selves, who want to enlist their aid to save Illyana.

So does this mini-series pave the way for the resurrection of Illyana? Don't ask Raab, his lips are sealed. "I don't want to give it away because that's the big question for the final issue," he said. "We know lots of fans want her back. We know many others *don't* want her back. We've also worked in a few details—not yet approved by the editors—with some far-reaching ramifications. We just hope people are surprised and pleased at the ending." ■ *Paul M. Anderson*

Old meets New Mutants (from the top): Cannonball, Mirage, Sunspot, Wolfsbane, Magik and Cypher.

SEPTEMBER 1997

AN UNHOLY EVIL IS UNLEASHED...

LOEB/CHURCHILL REUNITE FOR AWESOME NEW MINI-SERIES

The Coven is "Scooby Doo meets the X-Men."

Jeph Loeb and **Ian Churchill** are ready to launch their Awesome new comic project.

Former *Cable* and "Heroes Reborn" *Avengers* creative team Loeb and Churchill reunite to create a new mini-series at Awesome Entertainment called ***The Coven***. Scheduled as a four-issue mini-series, the first issue debuts in August, with an all-new mystical superteam.

"It's like Scooby Doo meets the X-Men and Doctor Strange," said Churchill. "This is a real-world based series with elements of the supernatural mixed in. Their clothes will change with each issue, they'll need to go to the bathroom and other fun stuff like that."

The Coven focuses on a young woman codenamed Phenomena and her newfound ability to detect supernatural happenings in the world. Through her frightening new powers, Phenomena comes across a group of other supernatural beings (Black Mass, Scratch, Fantom and with issue #2, Spellcaster) calling themselves The Coven. Persuading Phenomena to join the team, the Coven uses Phenomena's powers to help them find five ancient mystical artifacts that contain the power to forever change the universe.

"What makes this series fun is that we're dealing with a team that is still learning their powers as they go along, and watching how they learn to use them," said Loeb. "Making problems worse, there is a dark and evil supernatural team called the Pentad, that is trying to get these artifacts too.

"Given the general interest in 'X-Files' and 'Millennium,' we believe *The Coven* is a hot property," continued Loeb. "The point of Awesome Entertainment is to see where we can take our properties in terms of motion pictures and television and, hopefully, we'll announce something along that line with *The Coven* before we even announce the next mini-series." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

CYCLOPS/RIKER COMPARISON

A couple of months ago, Marvel Comics' release of the *Star Trek/X-Men* one-shot was a surprise hit. Think Marvel might go for a sequel pairing everyone's favorite merry mutants with Star Trek's "Next Generation" cast? If Marvel does, you might have a hard time telling X-leader Cyclops and "TNG" first mate Will Riker apart. Take a look at all the similarities. ■ *Jason C. Dunn*

Everett Collection

CYCLOPS	RIKER
Born in Alaska.	Born in Alaska.
Mother died when he was still a child.	Mother died when he was still a child.
His father, Christopher Summers, was a military man.	His father, Kyle Riker, was a Starfleet man.
His brother, Havok, is jealous of him and now leads the terrorist group The Brotherhood.	His transporter-made clone, Tom, is jealous of him and is now a member of the terrorist group The Maquis.
Excellent pilot, brilliant strategist.	Excellent pilot, brilliant strategist.
Takes his marching orders from Professor Charles Xavier, a bald guy.	Takes his marching orders from Capt. Jean-Luc Picard, a bald guy.
Traveled time with his wife to stop the threat of Apocalypse.	Traveled time with his crewmates to stop the apocalyptic threat of the Borg.
Bagged and married a buxom redhead who has mental powers.	Bagged and dated a buxom brunette who has mental powers.

'Ascension' Rises for Top Cow in Fall

Top Cow Comics veterans **David Finch** (*Cyberforce*) and **Batt** (*Darkness*) ascend to something great in September—a brand-new title and creator ownership.

Top Cow rolls out *Ascension* as an ongoing monthly with Finch as co-writer and penciler, and Batt as co-writer and inker. The title, according to Finch, "is the story of a scientist and a soldier who get caught up in a conflict between two ancient races." The races are the scientific Mineans and the warlike Dayaks, both of whom are after the pages of a supernatural, arcane book.

"The races exist on kind of an alternate plane," explains Batt. "They're half in phase with us, but even though we can't see them, they're still affected by our environmental mistakes."

Such a mistake was made at Chernobyl, the Soviet nuclear accident of about a decade ago. Enter our two main characters: Andromeda and Lucien. "Andy is a female scientist investigating the after-effects of Chernobyl," said Finch, "and Lucien acts as her bodyguard."

The Mineans and Dayaks cross over into our world at Chernobyl looking for pages of the book, but Andromeda and Lucien have already been exposed to the pages, which gave them bizarre powers. Andromeda is now a telepath, while Lucien's a super-strong winged powerhouse. Both are thrown into conflict with the villain-in-attendance, Vladimir Gregorieff, Andy's boss, who's also been affected, most negatively, by the powerful pages.

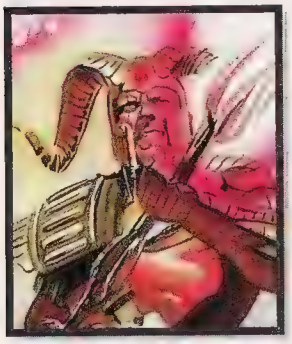
Being a series owned by Finch and Batt, *Ascension* will be distanced from the rest of Top Cow, at least initially.

"We're very separate for now because we want to set everything up," said Finch. "We can always cross into the rest of the universe, but we don't have any plans for that now." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

DC Searches for Artist on Delayed 'Kingdom' Project

For those who fear *Kingdom* will never come, have faith. Dan Raspler, editor for DC's much-anticipated prequel to last year's wildly popular *Kingdom Come* mini-series, says the project is not only still in the works, but will be worth the wait.

Writer **Mark Waid** is still toiling away on the project that Raspler says is an in-continuity prequel series to the Elseworlds future event. Because of that complex nature, and because this is what Raspler describes as a "labor of love" for Waid, the editor says he won't succumb to pressures to get the product out soon if speed would jeopardize quality.



***Kingdom* is said to focus on the rise of Magog.**

The prolific Waid says he has produced three versions of the premiere issue, with each incarnation "bigger, stronger, better" than the prior version. But Raspler keeps searching for someone to supply visuals to the series. **Gene Ha**, originally named interior artist, and **Alex Ross**, who was to have served as cover artist, have left the project. There's been no word from Raspler on a replacement team. ■ *Scott A. Aubrey*

'Vampirella Month' Has a Vertigo Flavor

Although Harris Comics' unofficial catch phrase for October is "Vampirella Month—Bring a Shovel," the tag line could read, "Vampi Gets Vertigo." That's because Vertigo suspense masters like **Grant Morrison** (*The Invisibles*), **Mark Millar** (*Swamp Thing*), **James Robinson** (*Witchcraft*) and **Alan Moore** (*Swamp Thing*) bring their gothic sensibilities to the queen of corpuscles in both a new ongoing series and a one-shot.

The ongoing, co-written by Morrison and Millar and simply entitled *Vampirella*, extends the story begun in the 1996 mini-series *Vampirella Lives*, in which Vampirella learned her true mission: to hunt vampires down to atone for the sins of her mother, Lilith.

"Though she discovers what vampires plan to do with our world, this is not a grim book," said Harris Editor David Bogart. "Mark and Grant take the serious and scary overtone of the total annihilation of the human race and intersperse it with moments that actually make you smile."

Penciler **Amanda Conner** and inker **Jimmy Palmiotti** round out the creative team, and Conner promises a tone that's a bit different from the usual Vampirella fare. "We're going to get more personal. We're going to get in her head and find out what makes her tick," Conner said. "Also, we're introducing a young female sidekick for Vampi, who she's teaching to be a vampire hunter."

Meanwhile, October's one-shot ***Vampirella/Dracula: The Centennial*** is a mega-creator feast, with three separate stories in one book. Vampi flies solo in a story written by **Warren Ellis**; she meets up with the Prince of Vampires in a tale written by James Robinson with art by **David Mack** (*Kabuki*); and in acknowledgment of the 100th anniversary of Bram Stoker's novel, a modern retelling of *Dracula* by Alan Moore with art by **Gary Frank** rounds out the book. The book includes chapter openings with atmospheric full-page art by **Mike Mignola** (*Hellboy*) and a cover by painter supreme **John Bolton**. ■ *Don Butler*

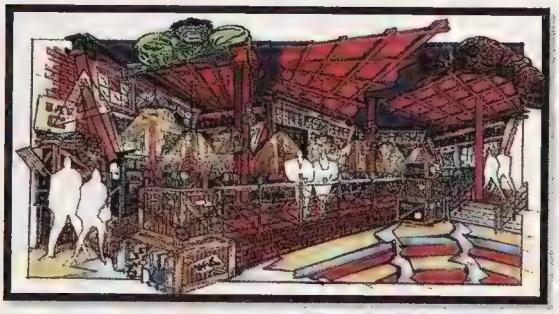
Marvel Mania Theme Restaurant Opens in California

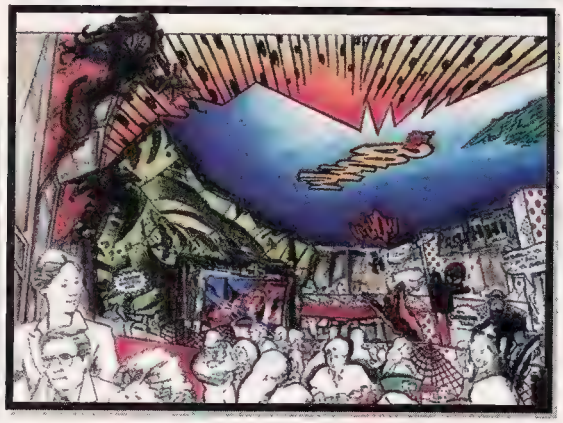
Thought eating with your favorite Marvel superheroes was a myth? Well, in August, Marvel Comics makes your dream a reality at the **Marvel Mania** restaurant opening in Universal City Hollywood, Calif.

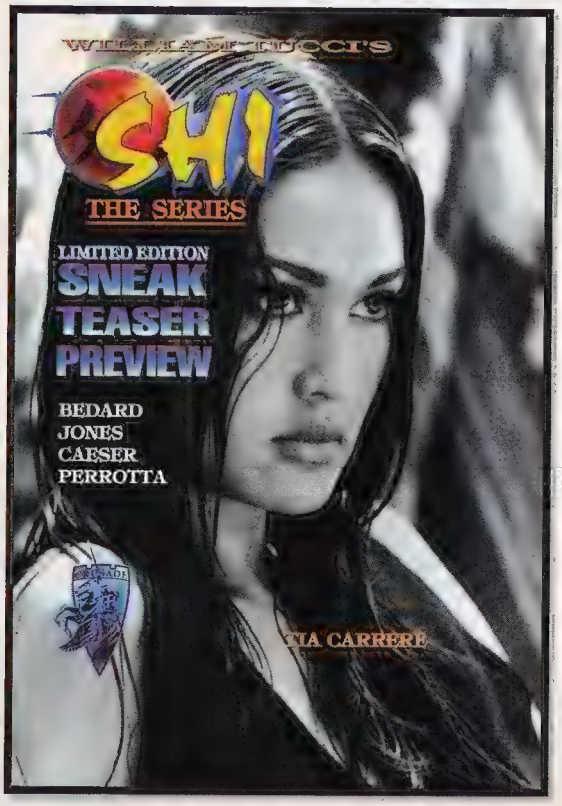
Marvel Comics in association with **Planet Hollywood** has created a 25,000 square-foot Marvel Universe themed restaurant that will seat up to 400 hungry patrons. Besides walls decorated with tons of Marvel artwork, the restaurant is flooded with hi-tech special effects (including lighting and lasers) to project the feeling of actually being in a comic book. The two-level Marvel Mania will contain a full bar, an interactive waiting area and a store to purchase Marvel merchandise.

The second Marvel Mania restaurant is scheduled to open in Universal City, Fla., sometime in 1998. ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Top: A model of what the restaurant looks like. Bottom left: An illustration of the bar. Bottom right: An illustration of the dining area.







Shi's the One for Actress Tia Carrere

Tia Carrere shows that Shi is the one by appearing as the cover model for the latest *Shi* project.

Crusade Entertainment has announced that a San Diego Comic Con-exclusive *Shi* preview edition will feature a photo cover of actress Tia Carrere, who has starred in **"Wayne's World"** and **"True Lies."** This edition features a 16-page preview of the upcoming *Shi* series that debuts in August.

"Tia is a big fan of *Shi*," said Shi creator Billy Tucci, "and being a fan, she offered to help us out by doing this cover. She'll actually be at our booth in San Diego helping to hype the series."

Carrere is rumored to portray the female heroine in a "Shi" movie which is still in discussion. "We have big announcements coming down the line," said Tucci. "Some may involve the movie, and Tia being at San Diego may have something to do with that. All will be revealed very soon." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

Actress Tia Carrere will appear on an exclusive *Shi* comic cover (at left)—and maybe as the star of a Shi movie.

DC to 'Chase' the 'Marvels' Formula

DC Comics is chasing the success of *Marvels*, with a new series in December.

Written by newcomer D. Curtis Johnson and drawn by artists J. H. Williams and Mick Gray, *Chase* examines the DC Universe through the eyes of a non-superpowered woman named Cameron Chase. Similar to *Marvels*, *Chase* explores a normal human's faith, fear and fascination with superheroes and supervillains.

***Chase* keeps tabs on DC heroes this winter.**

"This series is different than *Marvels* in the sense that Cameron Chase doesn't care for superpowered people," said Williams. "She's a government agent and an active participant in the superpowered activities going on around her. So instead of letting things happen and observing, she is trying to control the situations."

The new ongoing *Chase* series will stem from November's *Batman* #550 in which Chase will make her first appearance. The story will detail Chase's first assignment as a member of the government's Department of Extranormal Operations.

"It's a great launching story for *Chase* by creating questions surrounding who her character is," said Williams. "It leads directly into the first few issues where we set up the perspective of what the world of the DC Universe is like for the average person."

Each issue of *Chase* will contain superpowered cameos including an all-new **Suicide Squad**, **Rocket Red** and even a very brief inclusion of **Green Lantern** in the first issue. "There is also talk of Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman in time," said Williams.

"It's all leading up to the pivotal issues #9 through #12," said Williams. "Those will show how the government has plans when dealing with superpowered beings and how they actually manipulate them into doing things they might not normally do. And that's when the series really takes off." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

New Ownership Group Takes Control of Marvel

After a six-month court battle, a bankruptcy court judge granted a group of people who owned bonds issued by Marvel Entertainment Group control of the company on June 20, 1997. The bondholder group elected a new board of directors with famed airline financier **Carl Icahn** as chairman. The former board, headed by cosmetics magnate **Ron Perelman**, was dismissed.

The Icahn group now effectively owns Marvel Entertainment Group. Part of the new board's first act was the appointment of former Marvel Executive Vice President **Joseph Calamari** as interim president of the company. Calamari will, in Icahn's words, "restore Marvel to financial and operational health." Calamari replaces former Marvel CEO, Scott Sassa.

As of press time, no other personnel or any editorial changes have been made yet, but many are expected soon. Stay tuned to *Wizard* for more details and future announcements. ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

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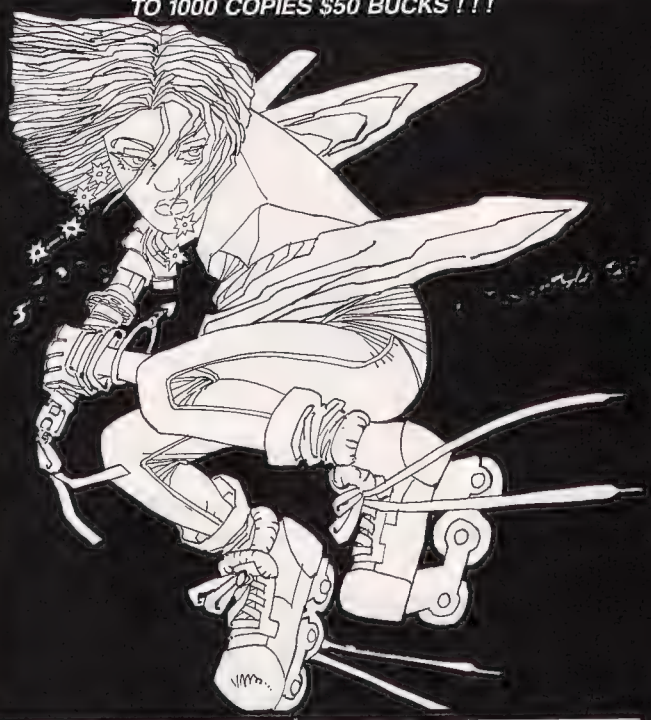

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'Kabuki' Moves to Image

Kabuki, the critically acclaimed espionage title by writer/artist **David Mack**, is undergoing a major overhaul that includes a new publisher, new schedule and a guest appearance from a comics legend.

"I'm billing this as the first ongoing *Kabuki* series," said Mack, who will give the book continual numbering instead of breaking the title into separate mini-series. The new *Kabuki* starts with a #1 issue in October from new publisher Image Comics and will continue as a bimonthly thereafter.

The first Image story arc is a three-issue origin which Mack hopes will resolve all the old questions from previous series and bring people up to speed with the character. "Kabuki is in an asylum, essentially being interrogated by a doctor," Mack said. "The whole backstory should dispel any lingering belief that Kabuki is just a simple assassin or some kind of 'Bad Girl.' "

***Kabuki* joins the Image lineup in October.**

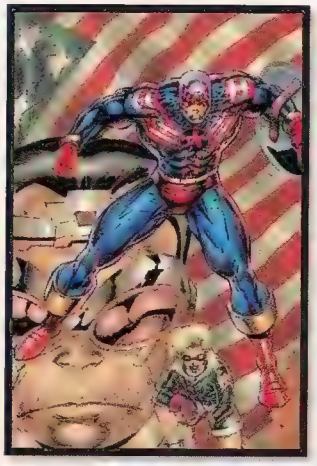
Mack will be aided and abetted by **Jim Steranko** (*Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D.*), who comes out of an extended break from comics to do an alternate cover for *Kabuki* #1. "I believe *Kabuki* is among the top three cutting-edge comics published today, and undoubtedly the most dramatic and poetic action-character book on the market," said Steranko. "It's in a class by itself." ■ *Jim McLauchlin*

Awesome Acquires Fighting American

No longer in control of Marvel's Captain America, **Rob Liefeld** is fighting for a new American hero.

Awesome Entertainment has acquired the rights to publish the classic Fighting American character created by **Joe Simon** and **Jack Kirby**. The Fighting American is replacing Awesome's plan to produce its own patriotic superhero, Agent: America (as reported in *Wizard* #71).

"Basically, we're taking the concept we had for *Agent: America* and tweaking it to fit *The Fighting American*. I know people thought that *Agent: America* was just stuff that I had in the drawer from my time on *Captain America*," said Liefeld, "but this is 100 percent new material."



Awesome's Agent: America is now the Fighting American.

The Fighting American will join the Awesome Universe as part of the "Judgment Day" crossover currently underway and debuts in July as a four-issue mini-series written by **Jeph Loeb,** with **Stephen Platt** penciling flashback sequences and Rob Liefeld penciling present-day scenes. "I have always been in love with the idea of doing a patriotic hero," said Liefeld. "Looking at all the patriotic icons of the past, they all seem to find their way back to Simon and Kirby. *Agent: America* was always our 'Plan B' if we couldn't get a classic icon."

The story centers around the notion that WW II was nothing more than a skirmish between two warring alien factions with a larger, more galactic purpose.

"Like we planned for *Agent: America, The Fighting American* will deal a lot with what happened in World War II," he continued. "But for the future, we'll introduce a lot of new characters and examine The Fighting American's relationship to other Awesome heroes like Supreme. He's going to be playing a big role in Awesome's universe." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

DOUBLE TAKES

Holy proctologist, Batman! Did ya see *The Savage Dragon* #35? In it, the Savage Dragon and guest star Hellboy get swallowed by a giant sea monster. When the Air Force blasts the beast to Fishy Heaven, the Dragon has to exit out of the place that our food exits when we're done with it (see right). Yuck. Makes a body wonder what kind of hobbies *Dragon* writer/artist Erik Larsen has. Anyone got a king-size Charmin for the Dragon?

byte this

WHAT'S UP ON **WIZARD WORLD**

SNOWSTORM IN SUMMER!

Keep cool during the August heat with an **Offspring** snowboard! Wizard World rocks the house with Offspring when we give away three—count 'em, baby!—three custom snow boards sporting the logo of the ultra-hot band Offspring! And it's a breeze to win! So get off yer duff and log on to Wizard World for your chance to win.

Monday and Tuesday nights are now absolutely, positively *owned* by Wizard World online! Nobody who reads Image Comics should miss the **Top Cow** and **WildStorm** chats, found every Monday. Crowd into the Wizard Special Events Chat Room to talk with pros from Top Cow and WildStorm every Monday night from 9-10 p.m. (EST).

Tuesday nights have become the official "drop in" hangout for comic pros. Everybody from **Jae Lee** to **Warren Ellis** to **Kurt Busiek** have dropped by recently. And don't miss **Mike Allred** on Tuesday, August 5th from 8-9 p.m. (EST). We'll get the killer inside scoop on Allred's upcoming comic and movie projects.

On America Online, Keyword: Wizard.

CHAT HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE SPECIAL EVENTS ROOM

AUGUST 5 (Tuesday)
- Mike Allred

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

AUGUST 14 (Thursday)
- MYSTERY GUEST CHAT (Guess who it is!)

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

AUGUST 18 (Monday)
- BREAKING IN WITH GLASS HOUSE GRAPHICS' DAVID CAMPITI

Time: 8-9 p.m. (EST)

AUGUST 23 (Saturday)
- INDY COMICS CHAT

Time: 9-10 p.m. (EST)

Photo: Harry Peterson

WANT ONE? GOTTA CHECK WIZARD ONLINE!

Check online for full chat schedules including club hosted chats

■ *Buddy Scalera* (WizardTGTC@aol.com)

Quicksilver Speeds into His Own Comic

Speeding onto the comic book scene, Marvel Comics is releasing a new ongoing *Quicksilver* series in September.

Written by **Tom Peyer** (*Legion of Super-Heroes*) and penciled by Casey Jones and Rob Haynes (*Cable '97*, *Excalibur #-1*), the new series will focus on Quicksilver's connection between the genetic tinkerer the **High Evolutionary** and his headquarters, Wundagore Mountain, where Quicksilver grew up.

"Growing up, Quicksilver's father **Magneto** left him and his sister, the **Scarlet Witch**, with one of the High Evolutionary's experiments, Bova the cow lady," said Tom Peyer. "With his wife Crystal gone because of the whole 'Heroes Reborn' thing, Quicksilver has left their child Luna in the care of Bova. The series grows out of examining this area of his past that hasn't really been explored."

When the mutant Exodus attacks Wundagore and the High Evolutionary, Quicksilver and an army of Wundagore's animal people take a stand. "Quicksilver used to be the young Avenger always giving Captain America trouble," said Peyer. "Now all these animal guys are giving Quicksilver trouble and we're seeing that he's gained a lot more responsibility since his checkered past." ■ *Matthew Senreich*

'Hellboy Jr.' Isn't Your Regular Hellboy

Don't expect the ***Hellboy Jr. Halloween Special*** to be anything like the regular *Hellboy* series.

"It doesn't have anything to do with Hellboy Comics and/or its continuity," said Dark Horse V.P. of Sales and Marketing Lou Bank. "It's just fun, wacky stories that are cartoony for adults."

The *Hellboy Jr. Halloween Special* will be a 48-page one-shot coming in October from Dark Horse. Written by **Bill Wray** (*Big Blown Baby*), the book will be illustrated by Hilary Barta, Stephen DeStefano, Dave Cooper, Bill Wray, and regular Hellboy creator/artist **Mike Mignola**.

The one-shot contains five separate stories, two of which are about Hellboy Jr. and three others about characters who live in the same universe.

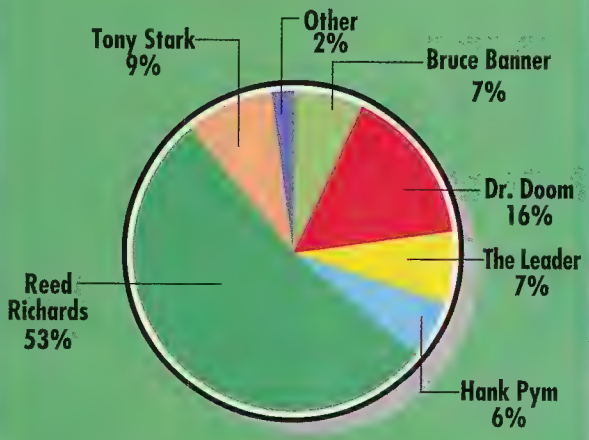
"It's a fun book that doesn't take itself too seriously and that has lots of goopy, manic kinds of action," said Mignola.

"If you want to see Hitler naked," added Wray, "read this book!" ■ *Micah Smith*

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Need a portal to the Negative Zone? How about some thermonuclear battle armor? An android with artificial intelligence? Heck, just call the smartest man in the Marvel Universe. Who is it? *Wizard* asked its fans through America Online's "Wizard World" forum.

WHO IS THE MOST INTELLIGENT MAN IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE?



Looks like a no-brainer. Mr. Fantastic was the overwhelming choice as the most intelligent man in the Marvel Universe. "Reed figured out how to beat Onslaught and he literally discovered the Negative Zone," said one fan. "He's the best damn scientist on the planet."

Said another fan, "Sure, Tony Stark can build armor, Banner and the Leader do stuff with gamma radiation, Hank figured out how to shrink and enlarge people, and Doom built a time machine. But Reed could do all that and more. And he has. He and science are one." ■ *Conrad Bain*

'Mystery Science Theater' Star Makes Comic Debut

"Mystery Science Theater 3000" star **Trace Beaulieu** makes his comics debut in September with ***Here Comes the Big People!***, a one-shot from **Event Comics**.

Beaulieu—who plays Dr. Clayton Forrester and does the voice of Crow T. Robot on the SCI-FI Channel TV show, will be joined by penciler **Amanda Conner** (*Vampirella*) and inker **Jimmy Palmiotti** (*Ash*).

Here Comes the Big People! revolves around a rich computer geek who writes a personal ad seeking female companionship. When the ad is accidentally beamed into outer space, it's read by a female alien who feels she'd be the perfect mate. She travels to Earth and transforms herself into an attractive woman.

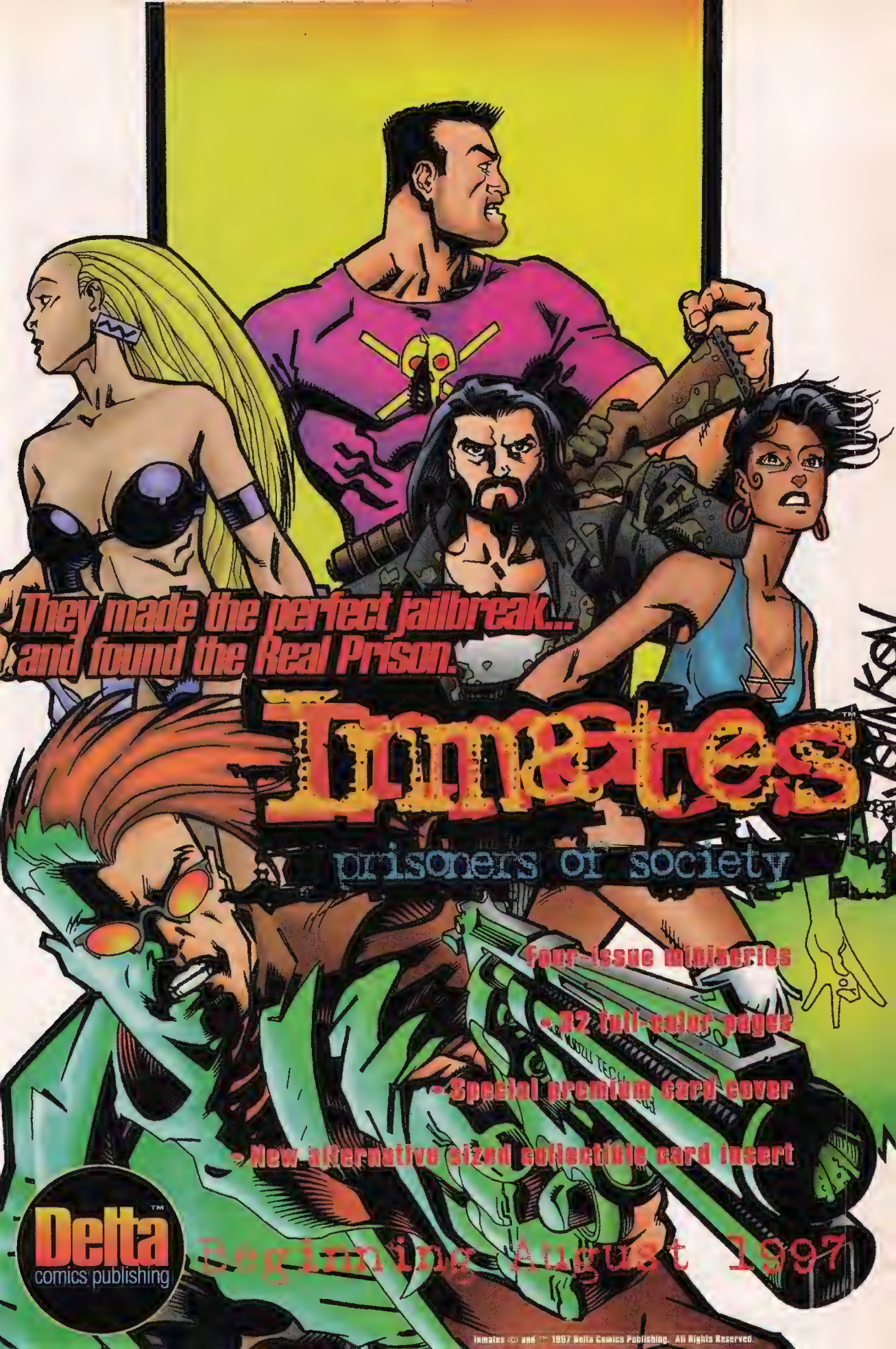
There's just one problem—she's 20 feet taller than the rich geek. Soon after, large women start appearing all over the planet, looking for men to "baby." And when these women "baby" their men, the men actually get younger!

So how did Beaulieu come up with this bizarre tale?

"I was watching these kids being carted around the lakes in Minneapolis, Minn., and I said, 'Geez, that would be fun to get a big parent that could carry you around in a big backpack, and you could still have your normal life.' It kind of mutated from that idea." ■ *Micah Smith*

we LOOKED it up

Fonn•Fonzz (John Jones) DC Universe. *noun*, 1955-present [*see also: Martian Manhunter*] **1** Member of the JLA, possessing powers of superstrength and reflexes, shapeshifting, invisibility and telepathy **2** Last survivor of Mars, having been stranded on Earth when planet-wide war broke out **3** The most common named used by Martians who are having an affair when they check into hotels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Chaos! Spotlights Classic Monsters

Halloween arrives in September this year as Chaos! Comics launches a new brand entitled "Chaos! Classic Monsters."

The brand will bring all-ages horror entertainment to comics, and Chaos! leads off with a legend in well-known horror historian **Forest J. Ackerman**. Ackerman will host ***Monster Matinee*** in September, a three-issue weekly mini-series featuring the theatrical monsters that have haunted the screen since the birth of cinema, including Dracula, the Mummy and the Wolf Man, in addition to the creations of **H.P. Lovecraft**.

Art from "Chaos! Classic Monsters"

Monster Matinee leads in to ***Chaos! Nightmare Theater*** in October, a four-issue weekly mini featuring tales written by Phil Nutman (*Evil Ernie vs. The Movie Monsters*), **Stephen Bissette** (*Swamp Thing*) and David Quinn (*Faust*). **Bernie Wrightson** supplies the cover for each *Nightmare Theater* issue. *Chaos! Nightmare Theater* is planned as an annual event for Chaos!, with a new batch of stories coming in 1998. ■ *Sean Jordan*

Kelley Jones Launches Creator-Owned Project

Batman artist **Kelley Jones** will launch his first creator-owned work this October. ***Hammer***, a four-issue horror series published by **Dark Horse Comics**, will also be Jones' first attempt at writing.

"I did not want to go into something without knowing where it was going to end up myself," Jones explained as his reason for taking on writing chores.

Hammer's storyline combines science fiction with a modern approach to gothic horror and a healthy does of humor. "I've also thrown in what I think are a lot of politically incorrect things," said Jones. "There's the kind of poking fun at a lot of the cultural stuff that goes on now. If you eat a potato chip, or Chinese food or popcorn, you are going to die. I just find that nonsense, so I have a guy saving the world who feasts on onion rings."

In the first issue of *Hammer*, Jones shows us a historical battle fought 1,500 years ago between two alien beings. "We come to our current century and it's starting up again," said Jones. "We have both the good alien and this evil whatever it is. By any means necessary they are going to achieve their ends. Unfortunately, the rest of us are going to get caught in the middle." ■ *Mark Aronowitz*

HALLOWEEN HOO-HAH!

Yep, you guessed it. It's time for the 6th annual *Wizard* Halloween Costume Contest! But time is short, so we want you to get off the bench! If and enter! Hey, where else can you dress up like your favorite character and show off to everyone what a geekhead you are? Besides, if we pick you as our Grand Prize Winner, you'll walk off with the most ludicrous prize ever! What is it? A Nintendo 64 video game system, plus a complete set of Mezoclone toys, next level Chaos assortment, including Cowboy, Smuggler, Bounty, Poacher, Shiv and Brass Brain. And yeah, there'll be a Rancho Rainier lip prizes too, just in case you're not top dog. The contest is a success. Rangor 18 is providing all the loot.

Anyway, here's how you enter:

1) Dress up like someone (or anything) you know – comic book character, video game character, something out of a book or movie, whatever! (the more original you get, the better your chances of winning).

2) The actual costume itself must be HOMEMADE, but you can add store-bought items to extend your outfit. For example, you can't go out and buy a Batman mask for your Batman costume, but you can use a cardboard for your Silver Surfer costume. Get it?

3) Have someone photograph you in your costume (Polaroids will NOT be accepted!), then write your name, age, full address, phone number and name of the character you're dressed as on a small piece of paper, attach it to the back of the photo (don't write on the photo!), and send it to the address below. All photos must be color prints, and we suggest taking multiple shots with multiple poses, in case some pictures suck. And remember that magic five-letter word: "focus."

4) To be eligible to win, we must receive your photo by August 15, 1997, so mark it or lose it!

Send your entry to:

Costume Contest 6
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Hey, if Price Guide Editor Bob Marshall can make a fool of himself, so can you!

Quilt to Be Raffled to Benefit CBLDF

A quilt made up of 12 pieces of original art will be raffled off at the San Diego Comic Con International in July, with proceeds going to the **Comic Book Legal Defense Fund** (CBLDF).

The quilt, which is entitled, "Black, White and Read all over," was designed by Cathy Stroup and Valerie M. Swisher. It will be on display prior to the drawing at the San Diego Comic Con at the booth of Cold Cut Comics Distribution, an independent reorder distributor.

Artists whose work makes up the quilt are **Jeff Smith**, **Brent Anderson**, Jhonen Vasquez, Lawrence "Gryphon" Klimecki, **Rob Walton**, Gary Spencer Millidge, Jim Hill, Michael Cohen, Grant Vetter, Eric Mengel, Jimie Robinson and **Paul Pope**.

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is a non-profit organization that protects the first amendment rights of comic book professionals on comic book issues.

Are there any similar fundraisers planned in the future for the CBLDF? "It is possible that next year we might be able to have one or two quilts or wall hangings done," said Stroup. "We are going to see if we can change the flavor each year. We will continue to do [raffles] as long as people are interested in having one." ■ *Mark Aronowitz*

3 FINGERS PRINTS
Not to sound condescending or anything, but everyone should think about grabbing ***How to Pick Up Girls If You're a Comic Book Geek***, a one-shot special coming out in late July.

AC COMICS
The second issue of the three-issue mini-series ***Femforce: Return from the Ashes*** hits in September.

ARIA PRESS
A 240-page graphic novel collects the first 12 issues of *A Distant Soil* in August. It will feature an introduction by **Neil Gaiman**, and the price is $18.95.

ATTENTION! PUBLISHING
September's ***Doctor Cyborg*** #5 kicks off a new story arc after the death of Malcolm Syberg.

AVATAR PRESS
Matt Martin's ***Snowman: 1944 Special*** #1 avalanches onto the comics scene in September.

AWESOME ENTERTAINMENT
The new ***Supreme*** art team of Chris Sprouse (*NewMen*) and Al Gordon (*WildStar*) debuts in September's *Supreme* #53.

BONGO COMICS
Bart Simpson's Treehouse of Horror special returns for the third consecutive year this September with a story written by **Evan Dorkin** (*Milk & Cheese*).

CARTOON BOOKS
Congratulations to Jeff Smith and ***Bone*** for winning the National Cartoonist's Society "Reuben Award" for Best Comic Book for the second year in a row.

CHAOS! COMICS
Evil Ernie: Destroyer #1, the first installment of a nine-issue mini-series, ships in September. Writers Brian Pulido and Philip Nutman promise no jokes and no fluff—just pure destruction. Art is by Kyle Hotz (*Venom*).... A stand-alone ***Lady Death*** #0 hits in October.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
As part of **Mike Diana's** community service requirement, the CBLDF has arranged for the artist to write articles for its newsletter and speak at comic conventions and "freedom of speech"-related venues.

CRUCIAL COMICS
Rat Bastard #3 hits in August as Roscoe J. Rodent finally tracks down the elusive Carmen Monoxide. It's 32 pages of full-color mayhem for $1.95.

CRUSADE ENTERTAINMENT
September's *Shi* #2 pits **Shi** and Tomoe against the head of the Aum doomsday cult to save Japan.

DARK HORSE COMICS
Timothy Truman, Thomas Yeates and Al Williamson join forces this October for the four-part *Tarzan vs. the Moon Men* mini-series, which features covers by John Totleben (*Swamp Thing*)!... September's *Dark Horse Presents Annual 1997* features a Body Bags story by Jason Pearson, a collaboration between Mike Allred and Jay Stephens, and the world's first comic strip by Penn Jillette, of the comedy duo Penn & Teller!... Dave McKean provides covers for the two-part *Aliens: Resurrection* adaptation, which ships in October....The Law gets a li'l fuzzy this October as the three-part *Predator vs. Judge Dredd* begins. **Brian Bolland** provides the cover to issue #1.... Don Beauvais provides painted covers to October's two-part *Starship Troopers* adaptation.

DC COMICS
The original team of Karl Kesel (*Adventures of Superman*) and Tom Grummett (*Adventures of Superman*) will return to ***Superboy*** with issue #50. Current writer Ron Marz has announced that he'll be leaving the book with issue #47. And, though it has not been confirmed yet, Barbara Kesel will probably write the fill-ins, issues #48 and #49.

EVENT COMICS
Painkiller Jane teams with the 22 Brides against Caliban and his drug-controlled runaways in September's *Painkiller Jane* #4. It's by writers **Mark Waid** and Brian Augustyn with artist Rick Leonardi.

FIREMAN PRESS
August's *Scud: The Disposable Assassin* #17 features a guest cover by legendary fantasy artist **Larry Elmore**, of *Dungeons & Dragons* fame.

FLYPAPER PRESS
Flypaper's first title *Hong on the Range* has just hit the stands and is written by **William Wu**, five-time nominee for the Hugo, Nebula and World Fantasy Awards.

HARRIS COMICS
Some of the comic industry's hottest artists contribute drawings for *Vampirella: Crossover Gallery*, a pin-up book featuring Vampi in double-page shots with characters like the Savage Dragon, Kabuki, Shi and Madman. **Art Adams**, Joe Lee, David Mack, Mike Allred and others provide artwork. The 32-pager is available in September.

HEAD PRESS PUBLISHING
In October, look for a one shot anthology entitled *No Justice, No Piece!*, with the proceeds going to the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund. It features the talents of **Shannon Wheeler** (*Too Much Coffee Man*) and Andrew Ford (*Rib*).

IMAGE COMICS
• HIGHBROW ENTERTAINMENT
August sees the debut of ***Megahurtz***, a new ongoing by Joe St. Pierre (*Secret Weapons*) set in a future where murder is only a misdemeanor.

• HOMAGE COMICS
Strangers in Paradise returns to original publisher Abstract Studio in September with issue #9.

• TOP COW COMICS
September's *The Darkness* #8 features guest artist Joe Benitez. One in every four covers will be a variant by regular artist **Marc Silvestri**.

• WILDSTORM PRODUCTIONS
The official title of **Jim Lee's** new WildStorm project, as reported on in *Wizard* #71, is *Divine Right: The Adventures of Max Faraday*. Look for it in September.

LABYRINTH STUDIOS
October sees the release of *Penguin Bros.*, a new ongoing that will have cameo appearances of the rock band **GWAR** in issues #3 and #4.

LIGHTNING COMICS
Hellina/Cynder #1 has the Lightning and Immortelle Studios heroines join forces for the first time, against the evil Stratis Corporation. The September release is $2.95.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS
Meet the **Razor** of the 21st century in September's *Razor Uncut* #40, drawn by Greg LaRocque (*Flash, Legion*) and guest-starring Tommi Gunn. The $3 book's for mature readers.

MARVEL COMICS
It's **Hulk** vs. Juggernaut in August's *Incredible Hulk* #457....August also sees *Marvel: Heroes and Legends 1997*, a 48-page one-shot featuring the talents of legendary creators **Stan Lee**, Steve Ditko and Gil Kane....*Spectacular Spider-Man* hits #250 in August and sports a double-gatefold cover by the father/son Spidey art team of **John Romita Sr. and Jr.**

MOORDAM COMICS
September's *Mr. Beat's Two-Fisted Atomic Action Super Special* pits America's number-one beatnik against Bongo Comics' Roswell, the Little Green Man. Andrew Ford's **Rib** also makes a guest appearance.

NEW ENGLAND COMICS
August's new ongoing **Tick** series has been renamed *The Tick: Big Blue Destiny*.

PENTHOUSE COMIX
September's ***Penthouse Comix*** #26 features the return of Penthouse's Night Girl by Tony Salmon (*Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight*).

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
September's *Sirius Gallery Pin-Up Collection* features work from Brom and Drew Hayes, plus all-new work from **Joseph Michael Linsner**. Better reserve yours; it's limited to 10,000 sequentially numbered copies.

TOPPS COMICS
Xena: Warrior Princess #2 sports a nifty-swell cover by famed "good girl" artist **Dave Stevens**, and offers a one-in-five photo variant cover. Look for it in September.

VEROTIK
Glenn Danzig and **Simon Bisley** bring us a full-color, 48-page tale in *Verotik Illustrated* #1 in August.

Official Signed Comics

Signed by Witchblade Writer David Wohl!

This exclusive limited edition comic stars Witchblade, the Silver Surfer, Wolverine and Mephisto in a special "Devil's Reign" prelude story!

We have **Wizard Authentic** copies of this rare exclusive comic signed by **Witchblade** writer David Wohl!

WBSS1H2S **Witchblade/Silver Surfer 1/2**
(Signed by writer David Wohl).....$19.95
Includes a certificate of authenticity, a Wizard holo-foil sticker & a special mygard protector!

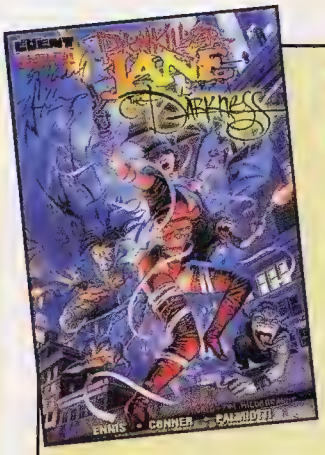
The Wizard Authentic program is a premium line of comics autographed by the top comic book creators!

Signed by Stan Lee!

He is "The Man" who helped create such legendary Marvel characters as Spider-Man, The Hulk, Magneto and Dr. Doom!

Stan doesn't do a lot of signings, but to help launch the **Wizard Authentic** program he has agreed to sign this scarce limited edition **X-Men 1**!

XMM1LS **X-Men 1** (Signed by Stan Lee).....$19.95
Includes a certificate of authenticity, a Wizard holo-foil sticker & a special mygard protector!



Signed by the Hildebrandts!

Written by Garth (**The Preacher**) Ennis, **The Darkness/ Painkiller Jane 1** was one of the most violent crossovers ever!

We are proud to offer our customers a **Wizard Authentic** variant edition signed by acclaimed cover artists Tim and Greg Hildebrandt! Recommended!

DARKP1HS **Darkness/Painkiller Jane 1** (Signed by Hildebrandts).$24.95
Includes a certificate of authenticity, a Wizard holo-foil sticker & a special mygard protector!

Signed by Warren Ellis!

Tired of being on the outside? Wanna get in with the in-crowd? Well now you can avoid being a deviant with this exclusive new DV8 story!

Hurry! We have a limited supply of the rare silver foil **Wizard Authentic** edition signed by writer Warren Ellis!

DV81H2S **DV8 1/2** (Silver Foil cover - Signed by Warren Ellis).$19.95
Includes a certificate of authenticity, a Wizard holo-foil sticker & a special mygard protector!

Signed by Adam Kubert!

For over three years, he illustrated Marvel's **Wolverine** and created such landmark issues as **Wolverine 75** and **100!** Now Adam heads to the Hulk!

Thanks to the **Wizard Authentic** program, you can get an official exclusive limited edition **Hulk -1** signed by Adam Kubert!

HLKM1LS **Hulk -1** (Limited Edition - Signed by Adam Kubert)..$19.95
Includes a certificate of authenticity, a Wizard holo-foil sticker & a special mygard protector!

Limited, Sealed & Delivered!

Ash 1/2
Limited Signed

Signed by hot **Ash** artist and co-creator Jimmy Palmiotti!

ASH1H2S **1/2** (Signed) $19.95

Avengelyne
Signed Ace Edition

Signed by Avengelyne model and co-creator Cathy Christian!

AVLA1S **Ace** (Signed) $19.95

Fantastic Four
Limited Signed

The hot limited variant cover of issue 1 signed by Jim Lee!

FFN1LS **1** (Signed).....$19.95

Lady Death vs.
Purgatori Ace Signed

This new **Wizard Ace** is signed by artists Jim Balent & Steven Hughes!

LDPA1S **Ace** (Signed)....$24.95

Signed by Men in Black creator & writer!

The truth is here! To celebrate this summer's blockbuster movie, we are proud to offer an exclusive Men in Black comic signed by creator & writer Lowell Cunningham!

MB1LS **Men in Black 1**
(Signed by Lowell Cunningham) .. $12.95

Marvel Comics
Signed Ace Edition

This rare **Wizard Ace** is signed by cover artist Glenn Fabry!

MCA1S **Ace** (Signed) $19.95

Star Wars
Signed Edition

This exclusive limited comic is signed by writer Kevin Anderson!

SWFS1LS (Signed) $19.95

Supreme
Limited Signed

This rare variant cover of **Supreme 41** is signed by writer Alan Moore!

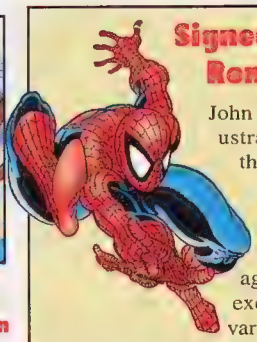
SUPR41S **41** (Signed) $19.95

WildC.A.T.S
Signed Ace Edition

This rare **Wizard Ace** edition is signed by artist Scott Williams!

WCA1S **Ace** (Signed)..$19.95

Signed by John Romita Sr.!



John Romita, Sr. illustrated some of the best issues of Spider-Man!

Now, he has graciously agreed to sign an exclusive limited variant edition of **Untold Tales of Spidey -1**!

SPMUTM1LS **Untold Tales of Spidey -1**
(Signed by John Romita, Sr.)..$19.95

Yes, you may photocopy this coupon!

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___	MB1LS	**Men in Black 1** (Signed by Lowell Cunningham)	$12.95	= ___
___	DARKP1HS	**Painkiller Jane/The Darkness 1** (Signed by cover artists Tim & Greg Hildebrandt)	$24.95	= ___

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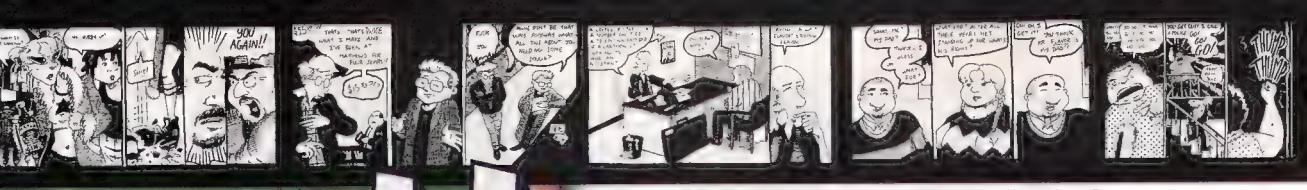
Box Office Se

Bridging the gap between the comics industry and the real world, 'Box Office Poison' is smart, sexy and full of laughs

ALEX ROBINSON
-97-



Sensation

This ain't no "Friends" episode.

Sure, Alex Robinson's *Box Office Poison* is filled with a group of 20-somethings living in New York. They live, love and merrily bumble their way through hourly-wage lives. And yes, the sexual innuendoes and situations run rampant. However, that's about as close to NBC's hit comedy as it gets.

Published quarterly and in black and white by Antarctic Press, *Box Office Poison* is smart, romantic and really funny—painful, honest, glad-that's-not-me funny. Robinson, whose tales follow the often-humorous lives of an ensemble cast, writes and draws the book with a real passion for his characters. His creations are fully rounded, at times sympathetic and nasty, callous and caring, inept and charming—just like real people.

"I think there's a maturing trend in comics," Robinson says. "People have seen the same [superhero] stories over and over again. After a while, you know that, say, the Fantastic Four is going to survive their fight. People might just be looking for something a little different these days."

And they'll find it in *Box Office Poison*, one of the new breed of "real-world" comics. The series' title comes from the 1981 movie "Mommie Dearest," referring to a character or story expected to bomb in theaters—much like the expected fate of real-world comics today. But *Box Office Poison* has crisp art and an engrossing storyline, which puts it two steps ahead of most current comics.

You probably know the stars of Box Office Poison already. There's Sherman, the neurotic bookstore clerk who wants to be a writer; Ed, the chubby wannabe comics artist who'd sell his soul for a date; Jane and Stephen, the cute couple sharing an apartment with Sherman; and Dorothy, Sherman's girlfriend who's slowly driving a wedge between him and his friends.

While it sounds like Robinson just transcribed the lives of his family and friends, he admits that little of the series actually comes from his own experiences. "There are some autobiographical elements," he says. "I work in a bookstore, like Sherman, but I don't have a crazy girlfriend like Dorothy. Just being in New York, you see things, you hear things that would work great in a comic, and that's where most of my ideas come from. At this point, I'm more following the story than leading."

With five issues and one "super-special" under his belt, Robinson's followed some crazy stuff. As the series opens, Sherman and Ed stand wearily amid the wreckage of a party at Sherman's apartment. Out on the fire escape, Sherman finds a beautiful partygoer who somehow managed to get her knees caught in the railing. After greasing her up and pulling her legs free, the two naturally end up sprawled atop one another. By the end of the first issue, they've spent the first of many romantic, and erotic, evenings together.

Alas, what poor Sherman doesn't realize is that his newfound crush is none other than Dorothy Lestrade, the mortal enemy and former roommate of his current roommates Jane and Stephen. It seems she had a bit of a problem with cleanliness…and manners…and paying her rent on time. But none of that matters to a lovestruck Sherman who cleans her new (but already filthy) apartment, rationalizes away her erratic behavior and takes her side against his own roommates. However, look for their relationship to hit some bumpy roads as Sherman meets Dorothy's parents in future issues. Robinson concedes that romantic

By James Busbee

Don't be deceived by the simplistic art style—*Box Office Poison*'s story more than makes up for it.

bliss is bad news for storytellers.

"The only time it's interesting to read or write about relationships is when they're first getting together or when they're breaking up," he says. "It's tough to make it interesting without any kind of conflict."

While Sherman and Dorothy's whirlwind romance is a key thrust of the series, Sherman's buddy Ed plays a major role as well. The unfortunate fellow still lives at home with his parents, dreaming of comics and women. Ed's ambition is to sell his stories and art to Zoom Comics, a monstrous company akin to DC or Marvel. But after Zoom rejects his samples, Ed goes to work for a forgotten cartoonist named Irving Flavor, a bitter, crusty codger who draws zany dinosaurs for cereal boxes. But all's not as it seems.

Ed soon discovers that Mr. Flavor is actually the creator of Nightstalkerman, a ridiculously popular hero of comics and cheesy big-budget movies, modeled after a certain Caped Crusader. But in 1944, Flavor sold his creation to Zoom Comics for a mere $55, and the company went on to make millions. Outraged by Zoom's shoddy treatment of such an important man, Ed champions Mr. Flavor's cause, hoping to garner the admiration and respect that the creator deserves.

"Mr. Flavor is patterned after Jack Kirby, [Jerry] Siegel, [Joe] Shuster and just about everybody else who began in comics, but ended up working for schlocky companies," Robinson says. "Issues #5-#6 are the life story of Irving Flavor. It was tough to write because it's such a depressing story, just this old guy talking about the Golden Age of comics."

Though Robinson nails the ins and outs of the comics industry, much of the series' strength comes from its very un-comic book humor as well as an eyes-wide-open view of sex. While the series features full-frontal nudity, don't expect Playboy-channel romps. *Box Office* sex can be passionate, mundane, funny or a little of all three. In one memorable sequence, Jane and Stephen carry on a four-page, gymnastic lovefest, all the while discussing a visit by Jane's father and the problems of Stephen's history students.

But despite all the series has going for it, *Box Office Poison* and Robinson have an uphill battle to fight. It's difficult to sell a real-life comic in a marketplace where mutants rule. "Real life?" Irving Flavor himself sneers to Ed. "These are comic books! No one wants to read about that!" But Robinson and the *Box Office* crew are doing their best to prove him wrong.

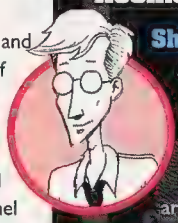
"I hope [real-world comics] become more popular," he says. "If *Box Office Poison* sticks around, I know it will catch on, and it *will* get an audience. If it doesn't, I'll name my next comic *Number One Best Seller*, and then we'll see what happens." **W**

James Busbee once got food poisoning from eating a blue squishee and a day-old corndog at the movies.

Ed shares a tender moment common to all aspiring artists.

Box Office Cast

Here's a rundown of the players who inhabit the world of Alex Robinson's Box Office Poison.



Sherman

A frustrated writer stuck in a menial job as a bookstore clerk, Sherman has begun a whirlwind romance with Dorothy. But Dorothy's shady past with Sherman's roommates has led to some tense times around the apartment.

Ed

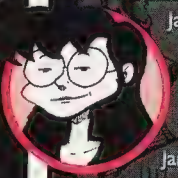
Ed is still a virgin and still living with his parents. Though his heart yearns for a job at Zoom Comics, Ed may have found his calling championing the cause of his current employer, Irving Flavor.

Dorothy

She seems to be the perfect girlfriend for Sherman—witty, sexy and uninhibited—but her apartment's so nasty it would gag a goat. Besides being messy, though, she's got problems paying the rent, has bad manners and quite an erratic behavior pattern.

Irving Flavor

Once a prominent artist for Zoom Comics, and the creator of the fictional comic book icon Nightstalkerman, Mr. Flavor now lives alone in Brooklyn, forced to draw cheesy art to pay the bills.

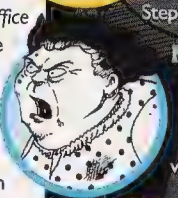


Jane

Jane's pet project, a graphic biography of turn-of-the-century anarchist Emma Goldman, will soon be published. But the return of Dorothy Lestrade into her life threatens to send the intelligent and feisty Jane off the deep end once again.

Stephen

The mellow and sensitive Stephen teaches history at a local community college. Of all the *Box Office* players, he and girlfriend Jane appear to have the most stable lives. Of course, Dorothy's fed Sherman hints that Stephen may not be as faithful as he appears.



Mrs. Tweed

The Eastern European landlady with a heart of stone, she offers cheerful greetings such as: "You noa pay vrent! You vrent pay now! Anh! Anh!"

James

A college buddy of Sherman's, James tears at Sherman's soul when he shows up with a sexy teenage girlfriend and a job that pays twice as much as Sherman's bookstore gig. ■ *JB*

"There is no storm such as this. It is a sickness in the sky. It is crafted in chaos, and even the darkness breathes."

–Orim, Journals of the Weatherlight upon arrival in Rath

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What has been released, will not be contained.

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Wizard *casts the* Astro City *movie!*

Casting Call

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

All photos by the Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.

Without a doubt, ***Astro City*** **is one of the best comics on the market today. Here's what it's got going for it: interesting characters, cool costumes, lots of action...and awesome stories. In the age of colossally budgeted, mindless action flicks, an Astro City flick would not only have alla that, but get this—it'd have a real good story. And to make it even easier for those Hollywood goombahs, we've gone ahead and cast everyone already. Here's who made our final cut...**

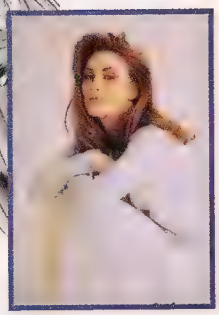
© Albert Sanchez/Outline

SAMARITAN

Playing Astro City's high-flyin', superpowered protector would be Richard Gere ("Primal Fear," "Pretty Woman"), who's not only got that clean-cut all-American look for both Samaritan and his alter ego Asa Martin (shown below right), but has proven he can play tough and intense characters.

JACK-IN-THE-BOX

Headstrong, fun-loving and very in-your-face. Those are the types of characters Denzel Washington ("The Preacher's Wife," "Courage Under Fire") usually plays, which is why he'd be perfect as the only cool-looking clown in comics!



© Jon Rogel/Outline

WINGED VICTORY

For Winged Victory, *AC*'s female powerhouse, we chose Julianne Moore ("The Lost World"). She's shown she can be tough and stand up for herself when provoked.

CRACKERJACK

Cheesy. Cocky. And loved by millions. Sounds like David Hasselhoff ("Baywatch," "Knight Rider") to us. Slap a thin moustache on him, and you've got our boy Crackerjack.

THE CONFESSOR

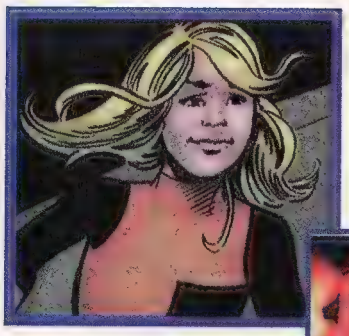
Playing one of Astro City's most mysterious heroes would be a breeze for Everett McGill, who had practice playing the shady villain in "Under Siege 2."

ALTAR BOY

Christopher Daniel Barnes ("The Brady Bunch Movie") would fit right in as The Confessor's young, naïve and enthusiastic sidekick.

DR. AUGUSTUS FURST

Having starred in tons of live-action Disney films, Dean Jones ("Beethoven," "Other People's Money") was born to play the caring dad and brilliant scientist who leads Astro City's brightest team, The First Family.



ASTRA

Being a kid with superpowers is nothing new for Kirsten Dunst, who played a young vampire in "Interview with the Vampire." File down those fangs and you've got Astra, the First Family's kid hero.

© Rob Brown/Outline

© Jeff Slocumb/Outline

NATALIE FURST

Natalie Furst, Dr. Furst's adopted daughter and Astra's mom, would be handled beautifully by the feminine and gutsy Rene Russo ("Tin Cup," "Lethal Weapon 3").

NICK FURST

Tony Goldwyn dealt with supernatural elements in "Ghost." Now he's just gotta switch from villain to hero, and he'd be great as Natalie's twin brother.

© Steve Sands/Outline

QUARREL

Winona Ryder ("Heathers," "Little Women") would be perfect as the athletic and sharpshootin' heroine. She has that subtle yet sexy look, and can easily pull off Quarrel's flippant attitude.

JULIUS FURST

Ed Asner ("JFK," "Fort Apache, the Bronx") is a dead ringer for the First Family's gruff but lovable uncle.

MR. BRIDWELL

Eli Wallach played a weaselly rat in "The Godfather, Part 3," so it's not much of a stretch for him to sell out the human race as the shapeshifting alien gathering data in preparation for an all-out invasion.

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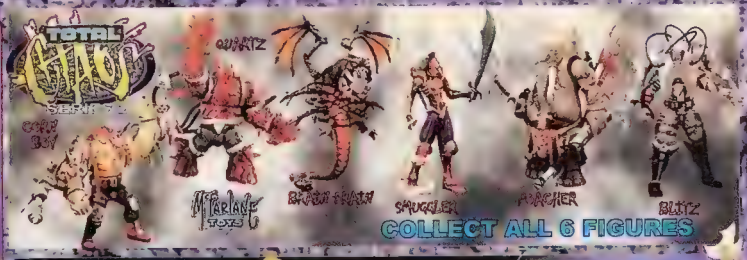

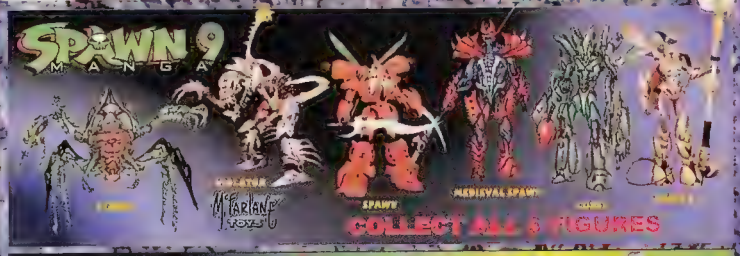

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LET US KNOW WHAT ARE THE 3 TOP ACTION FIGURE LINES YOU COLLECT

1.

2.

3.

DRESSED FOR SUCCESS

'WIZARD' UNDRESSES THE 10 BEST SUPERHERO DESIGNS OF ALL TIME

BY THE WIZARD STAFF

The most important part of a superhero isn't his name. Or how big his guns are. Or, to take a trend that finally appears to be breathing its last, how big her boobs are.

When it comes to fighting crime in the funnybooks, clothes make the superhero.

Let's face it: A hero's "look" is the first thing you see when you gaze at a cover and flip through the issue. So visual appearance is vital. But it goes beyond that. A successful wardrobe must also convey the hero's name and abilities.

For example, let's say you have a poster filled with nameless superheroes and you're holding a list of their names in your hand. Could you pick the heroes off the poster just by looking at their names? If so, you're observing a good superhero design at work.

What follows are what we believe are the 10 best superhero designs of all time—ones that not only accomplish instant name recognition, but do it in an dazzling way. So let's quit wastin' time, and see who made the cut...

10 JACK-IN-THE-BOX

HIS DEAL: Millionaire toy manufacturer Zachary Johnson is Astro City's mysterious hero who bounces around, subduing villains with his electrifying rubber noses and entangling confetti.

WHY HE'S COOL: Jack-in-the-Box does the impossible: He makes a clown-based superhero seem cool. All the elements that are trademarks of the jack-in-the-box toy are here: elongated arms and legs, flamboyant costume and a twisted, eerie makeup job that's even freakier than that possessed puppet from "Poltergeist." While he's a fun-lovin' hero, there's something about Jack's costume that hints at a sinister, darker persona. His lack of a red rubber clown nose, noticeable ears or "Bozo" hair (his Creeper-esque fur collar gives the illusion of hair) keeps Jack from looking like your typical circus clown. And his costume's muted with darker greens and orange rather than bright colors, which further pushes this hero from the ridiculous to the really cool.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "Jack-in-the-Box is basically the Spider-Man character of Astro City," says Alex Ross, the character's designer for *Astro City*. "I think the design works in that visually he's a clown character, but not too 'clownish.' He doesn't look like he's going to make balloon animals. He still looks like a superhero character."

Jack-in-the-Box is the coolest clown in town (above), but the bad guys might disagree (at left).

9 UNION JACK

HIS DEAL: Continuing the identity that's three generations old, Joseph Chapman is England's answer to Captain America, wearing his country's flag proudly on his uniform. He has no powers, but is excellent in hand-to-hand combat and marksmanship.

WHY HE'S COOL: With the English flag on his chest (which is called the "Union Jack"), this guy just says "England's hero." His simple, understated costume reflects this no-frills, no-nonsense guy. He's got no elaborate powers or weapons—but, hey, did James Bond need a costume? Taken a step further, his dark suit gives him that foreboding "man of mystery" feel that we comics fans just can't seem to get enough of.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "To me, the costume always seemed to be an automatic," says former Marvel Comics Art Director John Romita Sr., who has admitted to tweaking the costume over time. "The character is Union Jack, so the costume is the English flag."

Union Jack is the ultimate "man of mystery," wearing England's flag.

8 THOR

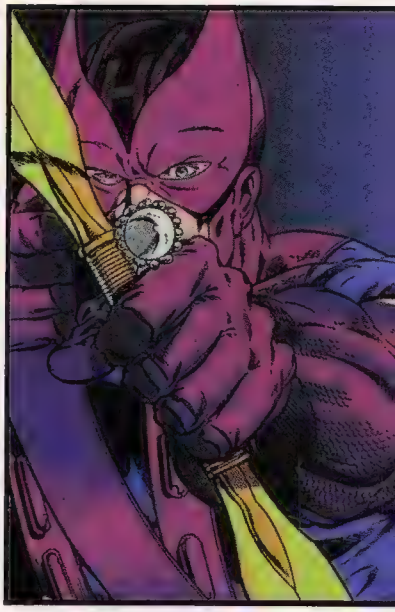
HIS DEAL: As the Norse God of Thunder, Thor splits his heroics between two worlds: his homeland, the mystical kingdom of Asgard and his adoptive homeland of Midgard (Earth). He wields the enchanted hammer Mjolnir, which can unleash unearthly storms at Thor's whim and transport him anywhere he wishes.

WHY HE'S COOL: Everything about this character design says "Nordic." Which makes the look of Marvel's Mighty Thor 100 percent unique. There's no giant "T" on his chest (Odin be praised!), but there *are* Norse qualities: his long blonde hair (which also gives him that noble warrior image), his armor (those are steel plates on his chest, and his boots are plates bound together by yellow cord) and his mega-powerful war-hammer Mjolnir, not to mention that helmet he wears to protect his Asgardian noggin. A sleeveless tunic helps accentuate Thor's huge biceps, as do his wrist guards. Sure, Thor's a major powerhouse, but these cool accessories just emphasize that even more. And on a side note, Thor's one of the few caped superheroes in the Marvel Universe. It just adds a certain unique elegance to Marvel's answer to Superman.

With his hammer, Thor can command mighty storms, like a Norse God of Thunder should!

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "It was a kind of a modern graphic interpretation of viking outfits done in the traditional superhero mode," says former *Thor* writer/artist Walt Simonson. "With the kind of wrappings around the leggings and the winged helmet, it was a cross of what vikings actually wore and what everybody thought they wore for many years. There's a nice historical quality and a real nice graphic quality, and the costume kind of splits the difference between them."

7 HAWKEYE



HIS DEAL: Former circus marksman Clint Barton left his small-time gig to join The Avengers as a master trickshot and hand-to-hand combatant.

WHY HE'S COOL: Think Errol Flynn-era Robin Hood. With a great swashbuckler look, Hawkeye truly lives up to his name, as expected from a real marksman. In fact, he's probably responsible for thousands of comic fans at least trying to take up archery at an early age. Besides lookin' so nifty, Hawkeye's costume is actually quite practical for an archer. That arm guard on his left arm? Sure it looks neat, but serious archers know that it's really there for a reason: without it, that bowstring would chew your arm right up. And in case the "H" on his forehead doesn't fill you in on his name, those straps running down and across his chest (which actually hold all sorts o' neat arrowheads) will, since they also form a subtle "H." And while green would've been the ultimate color choice for our boy Clint (DC's archer snapped that up), royal purple is a solid second choice.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "What a cool character," says Kurt Busiek, who most recently wrote the archer in *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* #17. "Hawkeye's costume is the costume of a physical character. Just as he doesn't have a superpower, he doesn't have super-clothes. [He's] the Robin Hood of superheroes."

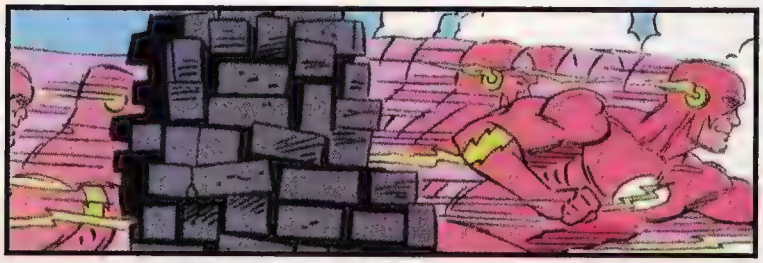
The straps running down Hawk's chest actually hold his arsenal of arrowheads.

6 THE FLASH (Silver Age)

HIS DEAL: When police scientist Barry Allen was doused in lightning-struck lab chemicals, he became the fastest man alive—The Flash. He died in 1986, saving the DC Universe against the nigh-omnipotent Anti-Monitor.

WHY HE'S COOL: The Flash's costume is simplicity at its finest. His striking red and yellow costume was always the brightest spot among the other icons in DC's Justice League of America. Sleek and uncumbersome, Flash's costume is quite practical, much like that of a runner's. (And considering when this costume was designed, it's actually before its time, since runners didn't start dressing down into spandex until years later.) The bright red color plays off loud, flashy race cars, and also creates a virtual red blur when Flash is running. This costume just screams speed, which the yellow lightning bolt breaks up nicely, as do the Mercury wings on his boots and ears, which also pay homage to the Roman god of speed.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "First and foremost, the character is a runner, so the costume had to make him look like a runner," says Flash designer and longtime artist Carmine Infantino. "The costume was simplicity itself. There was no encumbrance. The stripes on the belt and the wrists were put there to convey the feeling of speed, and they would look like a lightning bolt when he ran. The wings on the mask and the boots were there to enhance the look of speed when he ran. All in all, I think the simpler it is, the better."



The Flash's costume was before its time, since runners didn't use spandex until years later.

WILL THE 13TH ISSUES OF
CAPTAIN AMERICA, AVENGERS, IRON MAN,
AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR MARK THE END OF A UNIVERSE?

DISCOVER THE TRUTH THIS SEPTEMBER

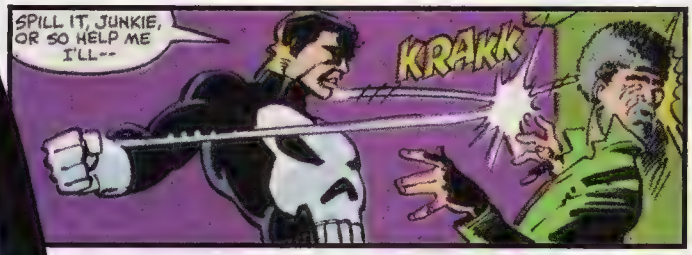
5 THE PUNISHER

HIS DEAL: When his family was accidentally gunned down in a mob war, Frank Castle vowed that all criminals had a bullet with their names on it.

WHY HE'S COOL: "If you're guilty, you're dead"—such was The Punisher's tagline, and it was reinforced by a look that *truly* struck fear in the hearts of criminals. Before grim 'n' gritty was the rage, The Punisher oozed darkness in a world of colorful heroes. Everything about this guy was black and white, from the skull on his chest (symbolizing the face of death), to his crimefighting ethics (you're either guilty or innocent, no gray areas in between). He doesn't even care that his face is exposed—the only people who see his kisser are criminals who ain't gonna be around long enough to talk.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "That skull symbol is hard to beat," says former *Punisher* writer Chuck Dixon. "It's probably one of the largest symbols on any costume—it takes up his whole chest." But its size is practical, he says, as it acts as a target that's layered on top of a high-impact armor plate. "Since all eyes would naturally go to the skull, the hoods would shoot at that and *not* at his head."

"If you're guilty, you're dead" is The Punisher's appropriate tagline—and it shows in his design.



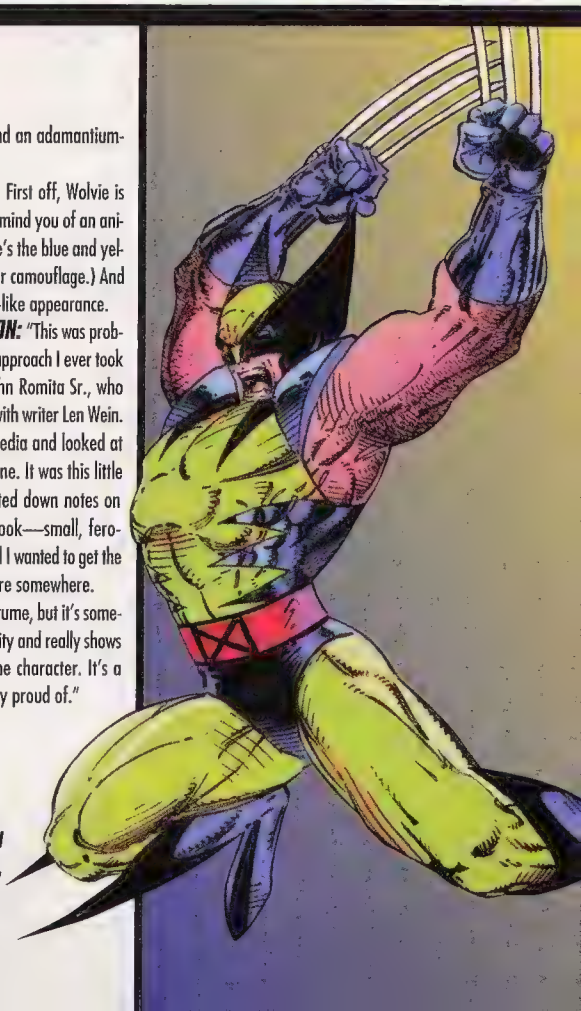
4 WOLVERINE

HIS DEAL: A member of the X-Men, this mutant has heightened senses, a super-healing factor, and an adamantium-laced skeleton and claws that protrude from his hands.

WHY HE'S COOL: Wolverine is an example of substance over style. His look tells you what he is. First off, Wolvie is short, just like the small scrappy animal that shares his name. His exposed and super-hairy arms remind you of an animal, as do his razor-sharp claws. (Not to mention his gruff 'n' tough bestial personality!) Then there's the blue and yellow color scheme, just like the Michigan State Wolverines. (Hey, the colors sure as hell ain't used for camouflage.) And finally, there's his pointed mask and boots, which once again give the costume it that feral animal-like appearance.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "This was probably the most scientific approach I ever took to a costume," says John Romita Sr., who designed the character with writer Len Wein. "I went to the encyclopedia and looked at the picture of a wolverine. It was this little ferocious guy. So I jotted down notes on how I wanted him to look—small, ferocious, almost catlike, and I wanted to get the element of claws in there somewhere.

"It's not only a costume, but it's something that adds personality and really shows the overall power of the character. It's a costume design I'm very proud of."



Wolvie's look goes beyond the costume—he's short, scruffy and ferocious, just like a wolverine.

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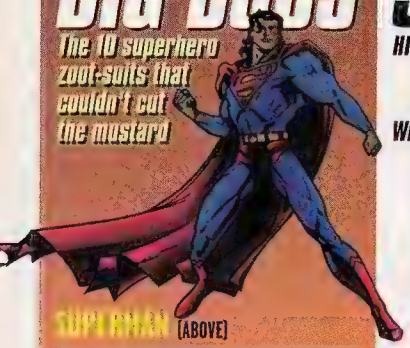
BIG DUDS

The 10 superhero zoot-suits that couldn't cut the mustard



SUPERMAN (ABOVE)

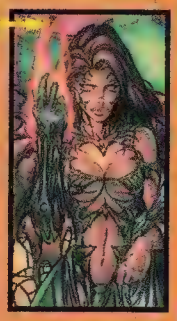
We're talking about the classic suit here, not that hunk-of-ass new one. And, before all of comicdom collectively jumps down our throat, all we're sayin' is that Supes' suit, while a classic, has one glaringly lame, horrifically outdated element: his red underpants. C'mon, DC, hire Alex Ross, Jerry Ordway or *somebody* to tweak that suit into greatness!

SPAWN (ABOVE)

Stylish, cool and gothic—but he doesn't look like anything specific. Sorry, but we couldn't pick you off of a poster if all we knew you by was your name.

WILDCHILD

Uh, what costume? We never said making a good costume was easy, but making *no costume* shouldn't be an option.



GAMBIT (BELOW)

What the hell is he wearing? A quasi-superhero suit beneath a trenchcoat? Looks kinda neat but, like Spawn, nothing specific.

cont. on pg. 48

3 BATMAN

HIS DEAL: His parents gunned down in front of him as a small child, millionaire industrialist Bruce Wayne has honed his body and mind to perfection preying on Gotham City's criminals as Batman.

WHY HE'S COOL: How many characters can you instantly recognize in the dark? Or from behind? Either way, none are easier to peg than Batman...and he's not called "The Dark Knight" for nothing. Intended to strike fear into criminal's hearts, his dark colors and sharp edges certainly achieve their mission statement and then some. His costume is extremely practical. Wrapped in dark colors, the bright yellow bat-symbol on his chest is intentional, to draw the bulk of any bullets. Good thing he's got tons of armor for protection underneath! And his cape goes way beyond the sheet-tied-around-the-neck look with its multiple crescent-cut edge; it's also a weapon that's weighted, capable of cutting, bullet-resistant, fire-resistant, etc. And of course there's Batman's yellow utility belt, which not only breaks up the black in his costume nicely, but stores all sorts of useful gadgets, from gas masks to gum.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: Current Bat-scribe Chuck Dixon agrees: "The cape and the mask make Batman, because even in silhouette you know it's Batman. There are very few characters like that. You always know who he is, which makes him very distinctive."

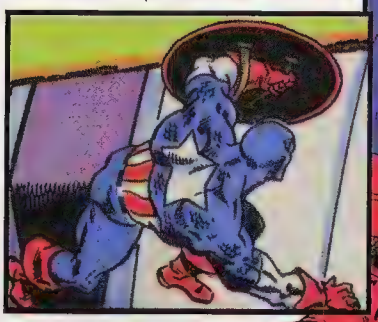
Even in the dark, you know it's Batman.

2 CAPTAIN AMERICA

HIS DEAL: Injected with the military's experimental "super-soldier" serum, 98-pound-weakling Steve Rogers was transformed into the perfect physical human specimen. He has since devoted his life to preserving the American Dream as Captain America.

WHY HE'S COOL: Captain America's design is the ultimate patriotic translation of the American flag. The stars on his chest and back, and the red and white stripes on his otherwise blue costume all derive from Ol' Glory. Plus, there's the American Eagle wings on the sides of his head and, in case you need the extra clue, the big "A" on his forehead that stands for America. The suit just inspires a sense of patriotism! And then there's his shield, which might as well be a part of his costume. It complements the whole red, white and blue motif and is the ultimate "weapon" for Cap—it's mostly defensive, as Cap tries to avoid fighting when solving a problem—but if something gets ugly, Cap turns it into a highly offensive weapon with his unerring accuracy throwing it.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "Captain America has the coolest costume on the planet," says *Captain America* penciler Ron Garney. "It doesn't need to be altered. It's not dated. It's a symbol, much like the man himself. He represents America and liberty—it's straightforward and to the point. Sometimes you have costumes on characters that gratuitously have other gadgetry, but this is just him and his shield."



Cap's look is the perfect translation of the American flag.

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BY SCOTT LOBDELL & ALAN DAVIS
CAPTAIN AMERICA #1
BY MARK WAID & RON GARNEY

THIS DECEMBER
AVENGERS #1
BY KURT BUSIEK & GEORGE PÉREZ
IRON MAN #1
BY KURT BUSIEK & SEAN CHEN

AND THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

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[illegible] (ABOVE)
He's like a bad 1980s MTV video nightmare. Somebody toss this guy back into the Duran Duran video he walked out of.

[illegible]
Pretty cool and somebody who almost made the list, but there's something missing in his design. He needs a slightly more Vertigo-esque weirdness about him.

[illegible]
Cool, sleek, simple design...but too simple. What do you get when you take the yellow out of the Flash's mostly red costume? A character that didn't make the top 10 best list.

[illegible]
Hmmm...a wisecracking athlete dressed mostly in red who often finds himself in conflict with the law? Sorry, the list was for the "10 best-designed costumes," not the "most embarrassing Spidey-Xeroxes."

CABLE (ABOVE)
...ugh. We hold this guy responsible for the shift away from superhero costumes and into the "doesn't take much skill" militaristic character design.

[illegible]
He's a monkey that rides a dinosaur. And he's naked. ■ *The* Wizard *Staff*

1 SPIDER-MAN

HIS DEAL: Bitten by a radioactive spider, Peter Parker gained superstrength, the ability to stick to most surfaces and the power to "sense" danger. He now uses those powers to fight crime as Spider-Man.

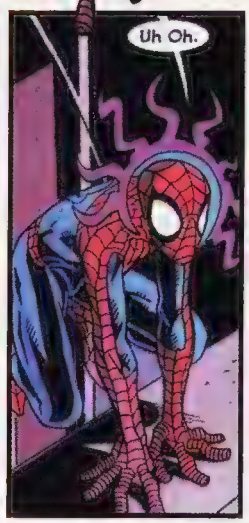
WHY HE'S COOL: Y'know, for a high-school kid, Peter Parker is one helluva tailor! Spidey's extremely detailed costume is so unlike any other, mainly because it broke away from the industry standards when it was designed in the early 1960s. Spidey's unique suit didn't have the underpants on the outside, didn't have his chin exposed and didn't have a set of stand-alone gloves. Adding to his sense of wonder are those big white eyes of his, which look cool as hell, as opposed to the thin eye slits of Batman, which look much darker and more mysterious. And even though his costume's red and blue (the flashy colors are representative of Spidey's bouncy, comical nature), it conveys a spidery feel with all of those webs, the two spider logos and its overall creepy-cool look.

PROFESSIONAL OPINION: "The costume was supposed to be a little bit spooky-looking," says Spidey co-creator Stan Lee. "The character is based on a spider and spiders are kind of creepy."

But Lee points out another tidbit about a completely covered-up hero: "I think that enables anybody in the world, whatever the color of your skin—no matter if you're black, white, Asian, whatever—to empathize with Spidey. He's popular with all types of people because when he's got the costume on, he could be anyone underneath it."

Alex Ross summed up the coolness of Spidey's costume best, when he learned of our ranking: "If you guys don't make Spider-Man the number one costume, you're crazy. I'll lose all respect for you. Spider-Man's costume is the best of all time." 'Nuff said. W

The Wizard *staff prefers the free feeling that being a nudist provides. Except for the fat male staffers, who have boobs and stretch marks and make us queasy.*



Beyond the costume, Spidey also has other spider-elements like "spider-sense" (which warns him of danger, at far left) and web-shooters.

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THE WIZARD Q&A

BY CRAIG SHUTT • PHOTOS BY PAUL SCHIRALDI

DC's executive editor reveals his love for his 'favorite son' Superman, why Hal had to die and why the time is right for a new universe of superheroes

Mike Carlin plays favorites. Four Superman statues, each featuring a different period style, stand together along one of the two ceiling-high window expanses in his corner office overlooking the Ed Sullivan Theater in Manhattan. The statues—and posters, action figures, videotapes and promotional pieces—seem perfectly at home in an office that resembles a kid's bedroom as much as it does the office of the executive editor of the DC Comics Universe.

"Superman will always be a favorite son," the Man of Steel's former editor admits while leaning back in his office chair, "which is unfortunate for Joey Cavalieri," the character's current line editor. "But I've always encouraged him to make the books his own thing." Carlin (or The Great Carlini, as he calls himself on voice mail) rose to his current position in 1993 after performing two major feats on the Superman comics: He linked all four Superman titles to tell a continuous story and he killed Big Blue.

It was a dramatic turnaround after being fired from Marvel Comics seven years earlier by then-Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter, who was notorious for having specific ideas on how comics should be edited. But Carlin has fond memories of his time there, and especially of his mentor, the late Mark Gruenwald. Carlin worked as Gruenwald's assistant editor in 1982-84, and collaborated with him on the massive 1996 Marvel/DC crossover. Both of these experiences have given him a distinct perspective on the Big Two's characters and how the companies compete.

Although DC has its share of corporate "suits," Carlin isn't one of them, dressing in jeans and a blue polo shirt. His personality fits the casual look, punctuating comments with a wry, self-deprecating humor. He leans forward over his desk as he considers questions put to him. Although modest in perspective, his quiet, even voice has enough edge to make it clear he isn't afraid to make decisions—or to lay back when it's warranted.

Mike Carlin

Vital Stats

Name: Mike Carlin
Occupation: executive editor of the DC Universe
Born: October 6, 1958 in Brooklyn, N.Y.
Base of Operations: DC Comics in Manhattan
Career Highlights: Worked with writer/artist John Byrne to relaunch Superman in 1986 as line editor; linked all four (now five) Superman books into one continuous storyline in late '80s; spearheaded mega-popular "Death of Superman" and "Return of Superman" storylines; named DC Universe executive editor in 1994.
Favorite DC Character: Bibbo. "He's my fav'rit! He embodies the enthusiasm and wonder people feel for Superman. He's fun to work with." His name comes from an old episode of "The Honeymooners," Carlin's favorite show, in which a guy with that name annoyed Ralph and Norton.
Least Favorite DC Character: "I have one—in fact, I have a list, but there's one I think really stinks. But you'll never get it out of me. Maybe you can have a contest to let readers guess it."
Favorite Comic Book Character: Superman. Carlin had his tonsils removed when he was two, and he woke up on the gurney with a bunch of Superman comics on his lap, compliments of his mother, a big fan of Superman, Wonder Woman and EC Comics. "That's one of my earliest memories. It must've been the drugs."

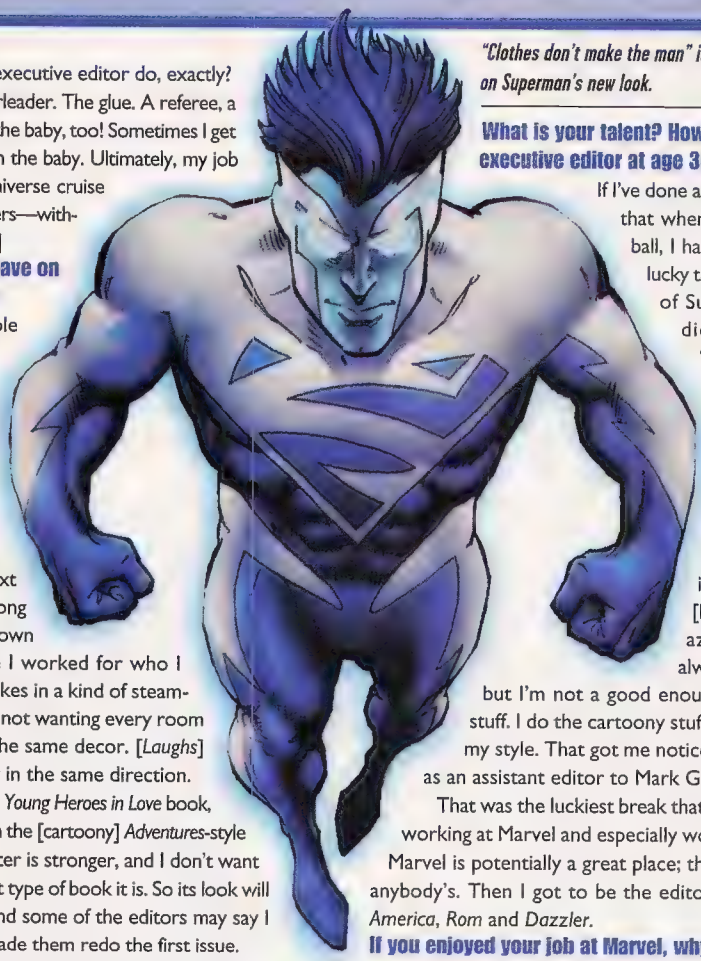
WIZARD: So what does an executive editor do, exactly?
CARLIN: I guess I'm a cheerleader. The glue. A referee, a daddy, a mommy—and I'm the baby, too! Sometimes I get what I want just because I'm the baby. Ultimately, my job is to steer the giant DC Universe cruise ship through interesting waters—without sinking the ship. [*Laughs*]

How much input do you have on the comics every month?
My theory is to hire people whose work I like and trust. We have a system where I read a certain number of books each month after they've been written, penciled and inked, but before they go out, so I can offer constructive criticism for the next issue. My goal is to pass along things I've learned from my own mistakes and from people I worked for who I thought were making mistakes in a kind of steamroller way. It boils down to not wanting every room in the cruise ship to have the same decor. [*Laughs*] But we really are still going in the same direction.

For instance, on our new *Young Heroes in Love* book, I've asked them to tone down the [cartoony] *Adventures*-style look it has. The subject matter is stronger, and I don't want to mislead anyone as to what type of book it is. So its look will evolve. If I were bossier—and some of the editors may say I already am—I could have made them redo the first issue.

But ultimately, having me looking over the editors' shoulders like that results in bad comics. I want to encourage the guys to do weird stuff that's never been seen before and that they're excited about, because that's how the readers are going to get excited, too.

One of the good things about DC is that we have such a diverse line. We can have a book like *Lobo* and one like *Starman* running side by side, which is cool. Personally, I couldn't edit a book like *Lobo*, because I don't have it in me. I'd like to do a humor book someday, but *Lobo* is a kind of humor I don't have a talent for.



"Clothes don't make the man" is Carlin's take on Superman's new look.

What is your talent? How did you get to be executive editor at age 35?
If I've done anything right in my career, it's that when someone has given me the ball, I haven't dropped it, and that's a lucky thing. That includes the "Death of Superman" story. We really didn't drop the ball on the "Return" stories; the writers and artists rose to the occasion and the pressure of having the whole world watching. That's my proudest moment here.

How did you wind up at DC?
I was doing freelance writing and drawing for *Crazy* [Marvel's version of *Mad* magazine] starting in 1980. I've always wanted to draw comics, but I'm not a good enough draftsman to do serious stuff. I do the cartoony stuff—it hides flaws, which I call my style. That got me noticed at Marvel, and I got hired as an assistant editor to Mark Gruenwald.

That was the luckiest break that anybody could have. I loved working at Marvel and especially working with Mark. I still think Marvel is potentially a great place; the characters are as good as anybody's. Then I got to be the editor on *Fantastic Four*, *Captain America*, *Rom* and *Dazzler*.

If you enjoyed your job at Marvel, why did you decide to leave?
They decided for me! The editor-in-chief [Jim Shooter] decided I wasn't doing a good job, so I was terminated [in 1986]. I was lucky enough to have worked with [writer/artist] John Byrne on *Fantastic Four* earlier in the year, and he was then working on Superman at DC.

[Then-Superman editor] Andy Helfer was phasing off the Superman titles to do *Justice League*, so the day I got to DC, I was the editor of Superman.

Nobody could ask for a more lucky sequence of events. Again, I could have failed miserably or really messed up, and I made some

mistakes; everybody does. Overall, if I've done anything for Superman, it was to take a character who was kind of floundering around and give him a point of view. A lot of that at first meant letting John Byrne's point of view be in charge; I think a good editor is someone who knows when to lay back and let the creator do his thing. I didn't think I really became editor of Superman until John left. Until then, I was just being paid to do it.

Going back to the now-legendary "Death of Superman" story, does it up the ante for Superman stories? Do you now have to keep doing bigger and bigger events to get attention?

To some degree there's more pressure. But my bosses have never said, "Give us another 'Death of Superman,' " and I've never said it to my guys. We'll never be able to do it again, and we'll *really* never be able to do it on command.

Event stories have become our style on Superman, but Superman needs a super-level of story. After 60 years, it's tough to come up with something that readers haven't seen before. "Death" wasn't a new idea for Superman—it was a fight scene, really. It's how we looked at the aftermath that was new. We did eight issues with our hero as a cadaver!

We realize that Superman's popularity is handed to us. That same story done with another character wouldn't have mattered. We know we have the family jewels to play with, and if we don't drop the ball, everybody wins.

Was it a difficult decision to change his costume and powers?

I'll trust an editor and the creators to be able to do a story with passion if they believe in it. We always try to have a point to our stories. Ultimately, "Death" was about not taking Superman for granted. We thought readers were overlooking him and being dazzled by the flashy new companies, and it was frustrating. Our new story is kind of a "don't judge a book by its cover" story. It's not the clothes that make the man.

So when is he changing back?

[*Laughs*] I'm not going to tell you the punchline to our gag. But I will say that before the story started, we knew the end, and everyone agreed on what we were doing. We've never said anything except that this is a story, and stories have endings. The roller-coaster ride will be fun, but you also know you're going to get off it some time—and maybe get back on.

Is it true there's another twist planned for this Superman story before the end of the year?

We do have a little bit of an event planned for the Superman costume/powers saga toward the end of the year, but I really can't spell it out for you at this point. Sorry.

There's a rumor that it might involve a Superbaby.

Sad to say, there are no plans this year regarding a Superbaby of any kind. I promise you.

How did you decide to link all the Superman books into one continuous storyline during the late '80s?

That was nothing more than my effort to avoid having the books contradict each other. The level of coordination we managed to pull off on the Superman books probably helped put me into the position to become executive editor more than anything. It's a hard thing to do, but it's worth it. I'm trying to achieve that level of continuity with the entire DC Universe. It's never been tighter than it is now, although we still make mistakes.

One of the advantages Marvel always had over DC is that their continuity was much cleaner—they only had 30 years' worth, and we had 60. Marvel has just had to deal with some of that with its "Heroes Reborn" stuff, and I hope for their sake they find a way to explain how it fits. But to me, it seems like an old DC idea. [*Laughs*]

I think 30 years is the point where you start messing yourself up even if you don't want to. It gets unwieldy. I'm not a fan of continuity *per se*; I see it as a necessary evil. But we're trying not to arbitrarily contradict things or start anything over from scratch.

But you did start over with Superman in 1986.

DC did, but it wasn't so much the current crew. Generally, the era of starting from scratch was the mid-1980s approach. If I'd been around when they revamped Superman, I might have argued that we didn't need to throw away the entire history. Anything we've done since could have been done within the old continuity—except for Ma and Pa Kent, and that was a big victory for the revamp, because they're great. But we could have done their stories another way if we had to, like with Lois Lane's parents.

Not to sound like a company man, but ultimately, I'll deal with the toys I'm given in

After the historic "Death of Superman" story, Carlin admits to there being pressure among the creators to top it.

the shape they're given to me and make the best of it. I certainly didn't want to confuse the issue by changing things back again. And now, after 10 years, we've created something that lets newer readers get in on the ground floor.

Have you considered breaking up the Superman storylines by title, as you've done with the Batman books?

We considered making it one semiweekly comic right before [former Superman creator] John Byrne quit in 1988, since he was handling *Superman* and *Adventures of Superman* [the only two solo Superman books at the time]. Now, that would be more jarring with separate teams on each. There's still an element of reading those titles you like and not feeling forced to buy the others. If the stories continue, we try to recap enough to let you pick up just one. We don't always succeed, but that's the goal. You're definitely only getting part of the picture, but we try to play fair.

The Batman split came about because there was some backlash that fans felt they had to buy a lot of comics. Yet sales on the books have had exactly no change, up or down. But it wasn't necessarily a sales thing; it was a breather, a change of pace for the titles. It was something to try, and now maybe it's time to go back to some more linked stories and then in a couple years go back to separate stories again. We should be changing our pitch every now and then just so it's not the same song and dance.

Is that why you've put new heroes into old costumes?

There aren't a lot of new readers coming into comics, because comics have been something of an exclusive club with 30 years of continuity to know. Why are we making it hard for everybody? We want to give them more places to jump on, like with Kyle Rayner [the new GL].

Old-time fans don't believe we care about them, because we make changes or kill their favorite characters. Ultimately, we're trying to reflect real life. The members of the Justice Society are old men, and old men die, sometimes in battle trying to do something they can't do anymore.

In the case of Hal Jordan, I refuse to relinquish our right to tell an unhappy ending. With 700 stories a year, they can't always end with the hero winning, can they? Besides, we're telling stories about the never-ending battle. I guarantee you'll see something of Hal Jordan someday in some capacity.

Everything is right for its time or it goes away. It's not offensive or an insult, it's the way it is. It was time for Hal to go away, and we picked this way to make it happen.

JLA is an example of a revitalization that fans liked immediately. It's fun. Part of the appeal, admittedly, is having Grant Morrison do it—because he's that Vertigo guy. It's like driving past a car accident. [*Laughs*] There's an appeal to the danger of not knowing what he'll do with it. But the pleasant surprise for readers is that he's doing something fairly traditional and upbeat and iconic while throwing in some new twists.

Are comics hurting themselves long-term by not creating more books for young kids?

We've been trying to respond to the frustration we hear that there aren't enough comics for young readers. But I would say that *The Power of Shazam!* [which Carlin directly edits] is as old-fashioned and young-reader-friendly as there is. The "Adventures" line [based on the Batman and Superman cartoon series] is another way we're addressing that market. So are the Cartoon Network and *Animaniacs* comics.

But the bottom line is that comic shops aren't going to order those comics in bulk, even though they say they want them, because kids aren't coming into comic shops anymore. The shops' problem is that you have to already be inclined to go to a shop to find comics. The newsstand distribution system has to be an answer of some kind for younger readers.

Do you think DC will ever overtake Marvel as the #1 comics company?

Marvel still has the momentum, no matter what the behind-the-scenes story is. The X-Men and Spider-Man books are happening. That dominance will break someday, and someone else will be #1. My job, and my guys' jobs, are to worry about the stories and let others worry about that positioning.

During the big boom of the early 1990s, we stayed with our focus on the stories, and in my opinion, slow and steady wins the race. Because of what we are, it won't be a brand-new type of comic that saves the day for DC—DC is about characters, and if we become #1, it will be our characters and their stories that get us there.

DC is doing a new line of books called Tangent Comics, taking just the names of some DC characters and completely recreating them in an alternate universe.

How does the line fit into the mix of characters? Doesn't it risk creating the same

"It was time for Hal to go away," Carlin says of replacing the veteran Green Lantern (left) with a hipper hero (above).

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Kula Shaker
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Luscious Jackson
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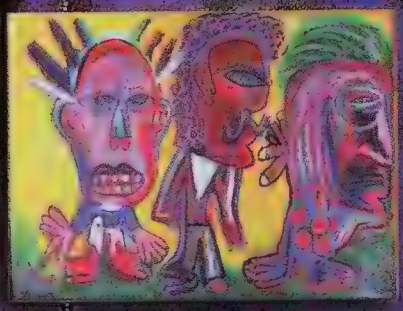

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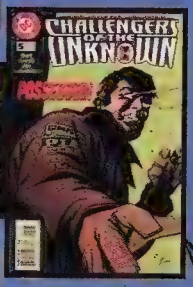
Unsung Heroes

Here are the top five DC sleepers that Mike Carlin thinks readers are missing. See if they catch your fancy.

Resurrection Man Meet Mitch Shelley—every time he dies, he comes back with a new power. "It's got a tone that we don't have anywhere else in the DCU."

Major Bummer Imagine Pauly Shore with superstrength and superintelligence. "It's my new favorite comic. It's fun and it's corny."

Scare Tactics A horror romp starring teen monsters who form a rock band touring the globe. "It's a very solid comic book, but people just aren't trying new stuff now."



Challengers of the Unknown This "X-Files"-esque book stars a team of paranormal investigators. "It's a masterpiece of design and draftsmanship."

Young Heroes in Love An offbeat book where "Melrose Place" meets superheroes. "It's a fun book. It's definitely different from Superman." ■ *CS*

problems that occurred with Earth-2, which was said to be confusing to readers?

Tangent is just a goof. It's a fun little idea. If we can give readers something they don't expect, we're ahead of the game. Right now, Tangent is nine one-shot comics coming out in one week; if they're a risk, it's only a one-week risk. If it's successful, Tangent has the potential to someday affect the DCU. But it's not going to right now. This is its only appearance, for now.

As a company, DC eliminated the Earth-2 stuff, but as a reader, I didn't really understand why. Even as a kid, I never had much trouble with the concept of another dimension vibrating at a different frequency from our own. [*Laughs*] I loved that Earth-2 stuff.

Is DC going to do another Amalgam Comics event next year with Marvel?

I wouldn't mind a new series, but maybe we should throw a new monkey wrench into it. I certainly think that would give us more room to play with things.

Marvel is developing a new Access miniseries [which crosses over the Marvel and DC Universes], and the story is excellent; it's really great. We'll see what happens.

Do you miss not having (late Marvel editor) Mark Gruenwald to work with on the Amalgam series from the Marvel side?

Oh, definitely. I miss that a lot, on a lot of levels. It actually took a lot of the fun out of it for me personally, but it didn't for the other creators. They had fun.

You're both up for an Eisner as the amalgamated "M.M. Carwald."

That's bizarre. A part of me hopes he loses, frankly. Fictional characters shouldn't win awards that humans will feel bad about losing. [*Laughs*] We were in the thick of it; we thought up the idea and kibitzed on names and stuff. But again, we were the glue; so many others really did the stories.

It's the same way I work on every project at DC. I couldn't do it without the advice of Denny O'Neil, Archie Goodwin and Dan Raspler on the senior editor level—I'd be a fool not to take advantage of that experience.

I figure my part is to guide and steer and occasionally raise a question. It's not about Mike Carlin's Superman or Mike Carlin's Universe. If I can make it something interesting while I'm here, then that's all I want. W

Craig Shutt's Universe is a fun place to visit. You can get all the cold cuts you want.

Amalgam Comics co-creators Carlin and Mark Gruenwald helped concoct Dark Claw—a combination of DC's Batman and Marvel's Wolverine.

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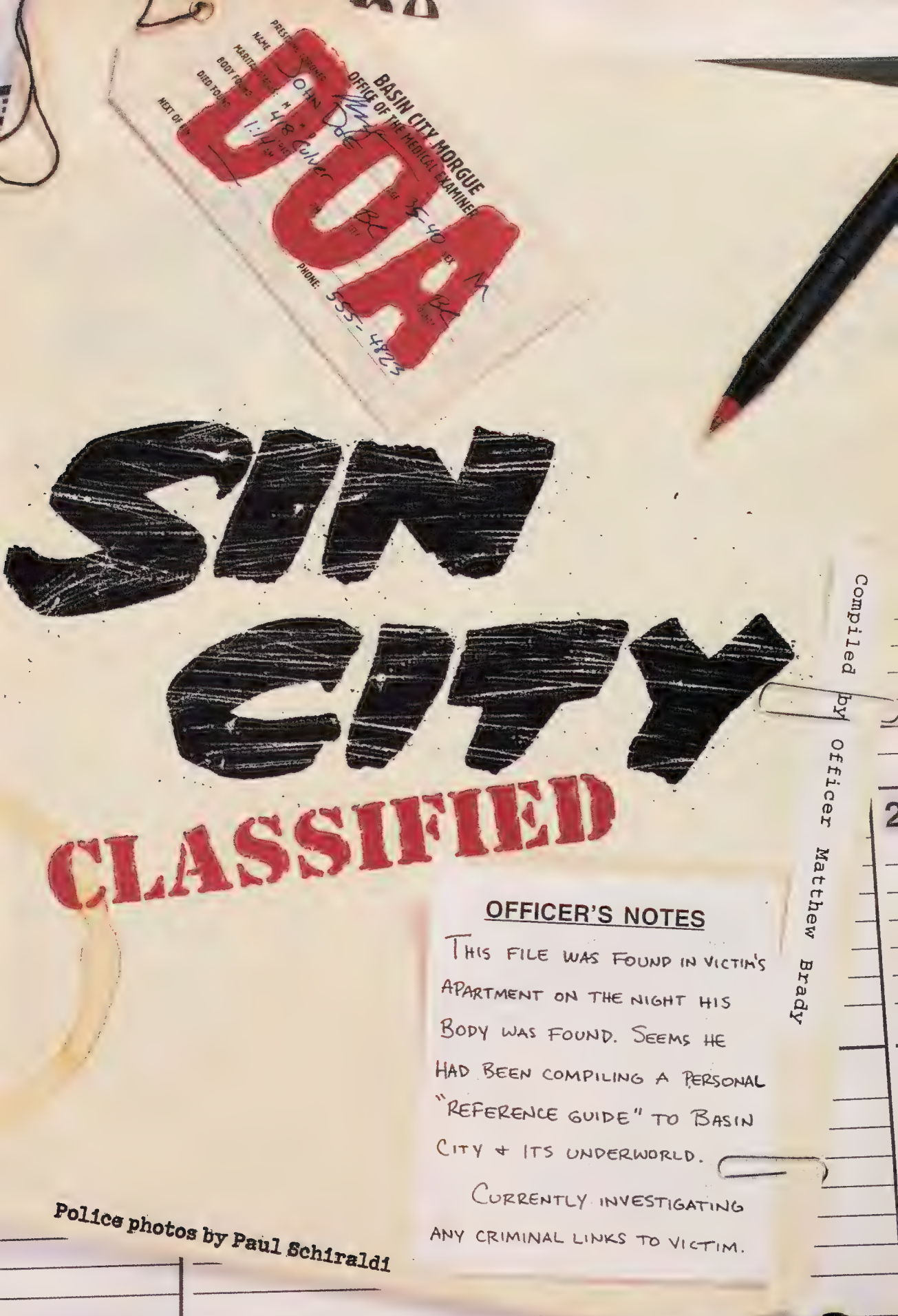


Police photos by Paul Schiraldi

EVIDENCE A: This was excerpted from the victim's journal found in his apartment. It was the final entry.

Journal Entry 314

This place is a hellhole.

Crime lords flaunt their power in white Cadillacs. Pushers hang out in every alley. Hookers have their own section of town to call their own. Even the law has a price.

It's a good place to call home.

On a map, the town's called Basin City, not that anyone ever calls it that. No, the locals call it "Sin City," and one walk down Culver Street makes it pretty obvious why.

A little research gives you the bigger picture. Years ago, this town was setting up to become a former gold-rush town turned ghost town memory in the middle of the desert, until a man named Roark had an idea. He decided to give folks one good reason to stay in Basin City — sex. Old Roark imported hookers from every corner of the globe, and brought them to Basin — which quickly acquired its new nickname by dropping the first two letters. He set them all up in a part of the city called Old Town, and they've pretty much ruled it ever since.

Roark's plan worked, too — but not completely the way he expected. Yes, people came from miles around to visit Sin City and see the "sights" in the wildest stop in the west. However, the ladies, free of any prosecution from their home states and countries, stayed on, setting up their own form of government, and passing their traditions from mother to daughter over the years.

When the ladies set up shop, everyone else came along too. The mob, gangs, pushers and petty crooks, as well as big-time criminals. They're all here, each one of them looking for a score.

In the meantime, the Roark family held on to Sin City. They've owned the town forever, it seems. Every high position of government or society has had a Roark in it at one time or another: mayors, senators, governors, priests and cardinals. The thing that connects them? They're all rotten. Every single stinking last one of them — rotten to the core.

With them at the top, is it any surprise that their city is the same?

EVIDENCE B: The following was a letter to the victim, intent on relaying information about Basin City. The rest of it was not found

u again, &

it's always a pleasure. Here's the info you asked for:

Newspaper: Basin City Times. (Owned by the Roarks—don't look for any real news here.)

Population: No one really knows. They tried taking a census last year, but people don't come here to be counted.

Sq. Mileage: Disputed due to property tax corruption. Depends on who you ask.

Weather: All extremes. When it's hot, it in the 100s. Winter brings bitter winds temps in the 30s, + wind chills cold enough to freeze your blood before you lose feeling in your face.

Culture: Dream on.

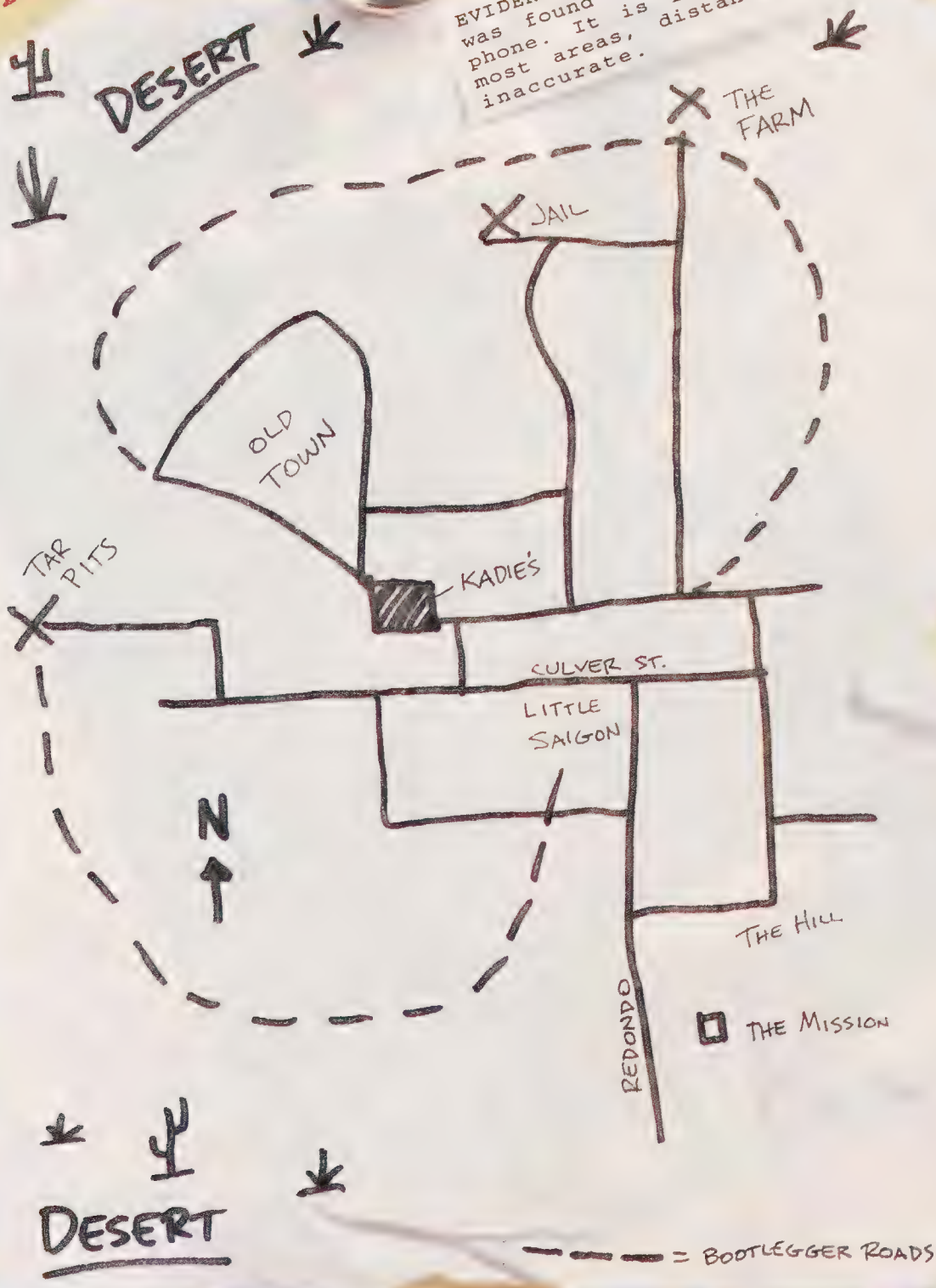
Commerce: Tourism. Heh. That's th official line, but we know where the "tourists" go.

I anxiously await your a

OLD TOWN
FRI.

THE FARM
SAT.?

EVIDENCE C: This hand-drawn map was found near the victim's phone. It is incomplete, and in most areas, distance is inaccurate.



EVIDENCE D: This pamphlet with photos was found in victim's journal.

SIN CITY HOT SPOTS

New in town? Just outta prison? Looking to score big? Here's a short list of places to see in Sin City. But you didn't hear it from us.

KADIE'S CLUB PECOS
If you're looking to get connected in Sin City, Kadie's is it. This night club's got great atmosphere, and sooner or later, anyone you're looking for comes through the doors. While you're there, be sure to check out Nancy's act. She can hold a roomful of guys mesmerized without even trying. And by the way, keep your trouble outside. While you're free to make all the deals you want at Kadie's, there's absolutely no fighting inside. Don't push Kadie on this one, she's got enough friends to make sure that if you start trouble, you won't be around to see it finish.

THE FARM
Stay away from this place. Too many rumors are floating around about what goes on here, and what you can hear from the road at night. Too many people have died at the farm. If you don't want to be one of them, just keep clear of it.

OLD TOWN
The city's corner of heaven. This part of town is run by the girls, and they keep it up like a well-oiled .45. If you're ready to pay, you can find any pleasure you've ever imagined...and a few you haven't. But be warned: The girls don't like any trouble, so don't go in looking for any. The Tar Pits are full of chuckleheads who thought they could cross the girls. And the cops don't bother them, so don't even think of calling for help.

THE MISSION (FORTRESS ROARK)
Want to see the best fortified house in the state? The Mission is it. Cardinal Patrick Roark keeps himself holed up there behind 12-foot walls and enough armed guards to start a small war. While he's there, he receives pretty important visitors like governors, senators and even some that are higher than that, all looking for favors from one of the city's most powerful men. Word on the street is that if you get within 50 feet of the place, the guards' trigger fingers start to get pretty nervous. A word to the wise: Stay away.

SANTA YOLANDA TAR PITS
Need a place that will swallow evidence up whole and no one will be the wiser? Check out the Pits. They were set up a few years back after one of the big dinosaur movies in hopes that tourists would rush to see a few fake dinos and a whole lotta tar. The paying customers stayed away, but it still sees a good number of "visitors"—many of whom never left, if you catch our drift.

THE FARM SAT.?

HARTIGAN 555-2612

EVIDENCE E: The following notes are believed to be written by victim. Will investigate connections to victim.

DWIGHT McCARTHY
The man to see for any photo surveillance. For real money, Dwight used to work for the newspaper, but now he mostly free-lances for Agamemnon, one of the local, half-honest, P.I.s. Dwight's a good man to have on your side, a hell of a fighter if things come down that way, and the pictures he takes are second to none. Like all of us, he's got a wild side, so don't ever cross him.

MARV
Stay clear of this guy. He does his own thing and is one of the best headbusters in town. He can't be bought, so don't even try, or you might find yourself at the end of his fist. Some say he's a little touched in the head, but the word out there is that when he gets going on something, there's no stopping him. Just buy the guy a beer and leave him alone.

FAT MAN & LITTLE BOY
Their real names are Douglas Klump and Burt Shlubb, and for the right price, these guys will do anything. They're decent fighters and don't ask too many questions, but while they're on a job, they tend to yack it up, talking about everything under the sun. If you get them for a job, make sure to tell them to keep it quiet.

MANUTE
No one knows much about this pain-inflicting brick-house, and that's good. He's rumored to have killed more people than you've probably ever known.

Folks say you'll never even hear him coming for you, but your pain will last an eternity until you finally die. If you see him, just keep walking and pray he's not looking for you.

OFFICER JOHN HARTIGAN
This cop is so honest, it's a miracle he's lasted as long as he has. Despite this, he's a pretty good guy to have around. If you ever get into real trouble, he's the cop you want to find. Be warned, though, he won't take any money, and he'll probably throw you in the lockup if you even try. And never, EVER ask him how he got the scar on his forehead.

THE COLONEL
This guy is frightening. No one really knows if he's ex-military or what, but he has a lot of pull in the city fulfilling some unknown agenda. Nobody's sure how big his forces are, but that's probably because no one's ever lived long enough to find out. If you hear his name mentioned, forget you did because what you know CAN hurt you. Last photo attempt: 6-2-97.

FINAL SERGEANT'S NOTE: Officer Matthew Brady has taken a leave of absence from the BCPD. He cited the brutality of this case as the primary reason.

LUCIEN
A SOLDIER THRUST INTO AN UNWINNABLE WAR HE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.
ANDROMEDA
A SCIENTIST CONSUMED BY A DESTINY SHE COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED.
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SPECIAL 16-PAGE BONUS SECTION!

SPAWN: The Next Frontier

He's conquered the world of comics. And video games. And action figures. And animation.

Now Todd McFarlane has his sights set on a new target—Hollywood.

McFarlane faces the biggest challenge of his professional career as he hopes to take his franchise character Spawn and sell it to mainstream North America in the form of "Spawn"—a $40-million film released by New Line Cinema Aug. 1.

Spawn's meteoric climb began in 1992, when the hugely popular McFarlane bolted corporate Marvel for the green pastures of self-publishing as a co-owner at Image Comics.

Spawn #1 burst into the number one spot selling an unheard of two million copies, and the book has consistently ranked near the top sales spot ever since.

And McFarlane has continued to build his empire. After comics, he ventured into video games. Then came his blockbuster McFarlane Toys enterprise. And, earlier this year, he exploded onto the animation scene with a high-profile late-night series of projects for HBO, setting the stage for his character's big-budget movie premiere.

What follows is a 16-page behind-the-scenes look at the "Spawn" movie. It starts with a look at the cast of characters who make up "Spawn" and continues with a day on the set with McFarlane. From there, we take a look at the makeup process the actors went through to achieve the look and feel of the Spawn characters. Then we hear a fanboy's dream, how one person got to be an extra on the set of the film. It all wraps up with our "Spawn" contest, in which you can win a prop from the film, among other film-related prizes.

We know you'll enjoy reading this and when you're done, you'll have only one question: What's next for Todd McFarlane?

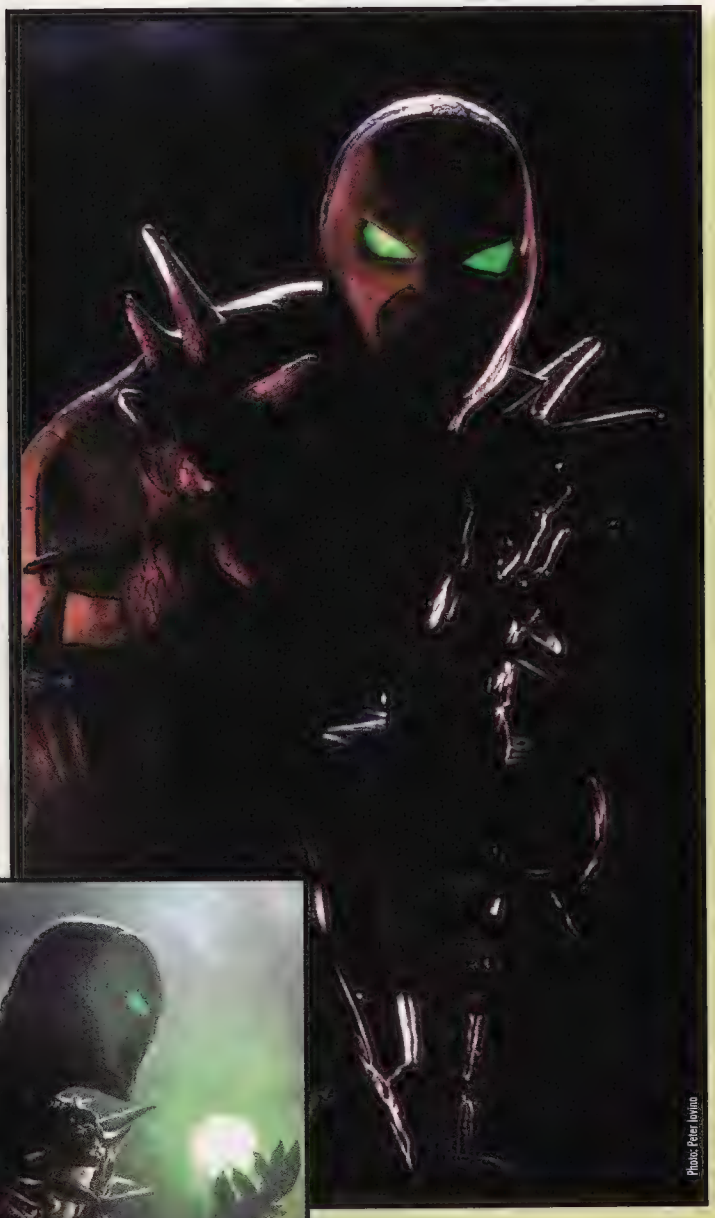

Photo: Peter Iovino

The 'Spawn' Scorecard

A rundown of who's who in the 'Spawn' movie

By Rob Allstetter • Photos by Peter Iovino

Al Simmons/Spawn

Actor: Michael Jai White

The Deal: An agent of the government organization A-6, Simmons is devoted to girlfriend Wanda Blake and yearns for a more peaceful lifestyle. On his final mission, he is set up, set afire and killed by the agency's leader, Jason Wynn. But Simmons, wanting to be with Wanda, strikes a deal with the demon Malebolgia and returns to Earth five years later, not knowing he has been positioned to lead Hell's army with Spawn's powers.

The Scoop: "He's not a cookies-and-cream superhero," says White, who withstood extreme makeup demands to get into character and handled many of the action sequence stunts himself. In the film, Spawn does not wear a cape, (a fixture of his comic book costume), but one does pop out on occasion from his morphing armor. Like in the comics, there are numerous scenes showing Spawn's non-masked, burnt-face "Hamburger Head."

Clown/Violator

ACTOR: John Leguizamo
HIS DEAL: An underling of Malebolgia, Clown's job is to get Spawn ready to lead Hell's army—antagonizing him all the while for a job he feels he should have had. To keep Spawn in line, the manic Clown transforms into the monstrous Violator, a cross between a "Jurassic Park" dinosaur and a praying mantis.
THE SCOOP: "Until you see him in costume, you can't believe he transforms into this weird, fat guy," says Executive Producer Todd McFarlane. Leguizamo, who frequently ad-libbed Clown's one-liners, endured long makeup and costuming sessions to become, as he put it, "the Jackie Gleason from Hell." Look for the scenery-chewing Leguizamo to actively promote "Spawn," as witnessed by his recent hosting of "E!'s Guide to Summer Movies."

Cogliostro

ACTOR: Nicol Williamson
HIS DEAL: A mysterious dweller of the streets, Cogliostro helps Spawn learn about what has happened to him and teaches him to use his powers. Take the appearance of the pro wrestler Undertaker and mix with the guidance of Yoda from the Star Wars films and you get Cogliostro.
THE SCOOP: At one time, Richard Harris was linked to the role. Williamson brings the same deep-voiced, Shakespearean qualities to the part. Cogliostro plays a major role in the film's conclusion.

Terry Fitzgerald

ACTOR: D.B. Sweeney
HIS DEAL: Fitzgerald is Simmons' best friend, and a public relations flack under Wynn's ever-pressing thumb at A-6, spin-doctoring the organization's less-than-ethical dealings. After Simmons' death, Fitzgerald marries Wanda and has a daughter, Cyan.
THE SCOOP: Sweeney, who is white, plays Fitzgerald, who is African-American in the comics. "The reasons [for this change] are many, but it's a lot about the quirkiness of who's right for the role," says Dippé. Sweeney and McFarlane share a passion for pro hockey.

Cyan

ACTRESS: Sydni Beaudoin
HER DEAL: The 5-year-old daughter of Terry and Wanda, she bonds with Spawn despite his horrific appearance.
THE SCOOP: Watch for the real Cyan, the daughter of McFarlane, in a birthday party scene.

Jason Wynn

ACTOR: Martin Sheen
HIS DEAL: The power-hungry leader of A-6, Wynn is in cahoots with Clown, planning to unleash a terrible bio-chemical weapon called HEAT-16.
THE SCOOP: "Sheer evil" is how Director Mark Dippé describes Sheen's portrayal of Wynn, who goes to great lengths to protect his stakes in the diabolical plans he and the Clown set forth. A veteran actor, Sheen brings a lot experience to the "Spawn" set. And he's no stranger to a role like Jason Wynn—particularly when you see some of his previous screen credits that include an obsessed Vietnam soldier in "Apocalypse Now," a corrupt covert agent in "Firestarter" and a power-mad politician in "Dead Zone."

Wanda Blake

ACTRESS: Theresa Randle
HER DEAL: The love of Al Simmons, Wanda overcomes his death and marries his best friend, Terry Fitzgerald. They have a daughter, Cyan.
THE SCOOP: McFarlane is impressed with the subtle changes Randle imbued in Wanda from early in the movie to after Simmons becomes Spawn. "She becomes a different woman, with different priorities," he says. Because the movie has more of a sense of closure than the comic, there will be a resolution—of sorts—between Spawn and Wanda, who becomes a pawn of Clown.

Priest

ACTRESS: Melinda Clarke
HER DEAL: Another member of the A-6 organization, Priest is more than happy to take Simmons' place in the ranks and helps Wynn set up Simmons.
THE SCOOP: Originally scripted as Chapel, Priest is a white female, as opposed to the comics version of Chapel as a black male. The name Priest was spun out of Chapel, keeping the church element of the name.

Zack

ACTOR: Miko Hughes
HIS DEAL: A homeless kid, Zack is eventually befriended by an initially bitter Spawn after his father is killed by the Violator.
THE SCOOP: "We wanted to add a kids' touch to the movie, so that's why he's in there," says McFarlane. Hughes, 10, is a huge fan of the Spawn comics, action figures and video games.

BIG MAC

Whether it's as executive producer or as an extra on the set of 'Spawn,' Todd McFarlane commands attention

By Rob Allstetter • Photos by Peter Iovino

As Todd McFarlane likes to say, he wears a lot of hats, but all of them say Spawn. Comic book creator. Toy manufacturer. Animator. Licenser. Different jobs, same character.

On this Wednesday in late October, McFarlane flies in from his Arizona home to wear his latest hat—executive producer on New Line Cinema's "Spawn" live-action movie.

Word quickly filters through the headsets of the crew at the Hollywood Center Studios: "Todd McFarlane is here." Even in Hollywood, McFarlane creates a stir.

This visit carries a special purpose, though. Director Mark Dippé is hoping to include McFarlane in a cameo in the film. Originally, the plan was to put McFarlane in a scene the previous week, but he couldn't make it. He had a deadline to meet on *Spawn* #54 and a baseball tournament to play in.

Then, the scene McFarlane was going to be in was moved up a day, so it's unclear if he will fit into Wednesday's shooting schedule. But whether he appears in the movie on this day is irrelevant in many respects—McFarlane is on the move. And *Wizard* followed him every step of the way.

Spawn creator/artist/toy manufacturer/executive producer Todd McFarlane adds another job to his résumé: playing a bum in "Spawn."

10:02 A.M.: McFarlane arrives on Stage 5 with his wife Wanda. Unshaven, he wears a dark blue Huntington Blades hockey sweatshirt, faded jeans, a Spawn baseball cap and sandals.

Mr. Hollywood? No way.

Wanda, meanwhile, is very corporate-looking in a dark green outfit. The contrast between the two is mentioned several times throughout the day.

McFarlane sneaks up on Director of Photography Guillermo Navarro, who is eyeing a monitor during set-up of an alley scene with Spawn and Clown.

"Hey, big guy!" McFarlane booms, giving Navarro a shoulder rub.

Navarro turns and breaks into a big grin. "Todd!"

It becomes immediately apparent that McFarlane is welcome—not only as the executive producer, but as a friend, a celebrity and an important influence—on and around the set.

Despite that, he says he hasn't visited the set too often during the first 50 days of filming.

"They're far too accommodating," he says in a whisper as a scene commences. "Plus, I don't want to see everything. I want some surprises.

"If I was here all the time, it would be a 1 percent better movie. You can get it done in pre-production. You can approve the storyboards, you can approve the costumes, the designs, the scripting."

Suddenly, the director yells "Cut!" and the shot is finished. McFarlane mingles around the set, touching base with Dippé and saying hello to members of the crew.

"Hey, there's Todd!" says Michael Jai White, who plays Spawn. "How you doin', man?"

McFarlane shakes hands and chats a bit with White, who must then return to the business at hand. McFarlane has business, too; first up is an interview and photo session for the *Los Angeles Times*.

10:32 A.M.: McFarlane walks away from the set to a corner of the stage with the reporter, who, not surprisingly, is also a fan of his work. McFarlane tells him that he was not afraid to make changes from the comic for the movie, including not having Spawn wear a cape most of the time.

"I want it to be more sci-fi and less comic-bookish," he says.

White then joins McFarlane for a series of photos. The photographer squats low and shoots upward, with White's Spawn looming over McFarlane's shoulder. The creator and his creation.

"I haven't seen this yet," Wanda says, referring to White's burned-skin Spawn face. "It's awesome!"

"I really don't see him smiling, do you?" McFarlane asks about how Spawn should look for the photos.

Then he makes fun of his own disheveled appearance: "He looks like a psycho, no wonder he's doing psycho stuff."

A fully made-up John Leguizamo, who plays the Clown, and Dippé arrive to join the photo proceedings.

McFarlane meets Leguizamo head on: "What's going on, man?"

"What's going on? I've got on about 40 pounds of rubber and sweat. This is all your fault!" screams Leguizamo, clutching McFarlane around the throat.

"Hey, I saw you were on TV the other day, sucking up to them pretty good," McFarlane retorts, referring to a segment on the "Access Hollywood" program that showed the makeup process Leguizamo goes through to become Clown.

"Yeah, first time we did [the makeup], it took like four hours," Leguizamo says. "It's been something else."

McFarlane, Leguizamo, White and Dippé pose for about five minutes of group shots. The entourage then turns the corner to watch two 13-foot Violator animatronic puppets. One is up and running, whirring under the remote guidance of a crew member, who is moving its long arms and head in various directions.

Leguizamo flings his rotund Clown body in front of his alter ego monstrosity, striking poses for a couple of photographers.

"Wow!" he grins, beginning to play with Violator's long fingers. "It's not going to go out of control and crush me? I'll be like Swiss cheese!"

It's White's turn to pose with his back to Violator, and Leguizamo reminds him of a helicopter crash on the set of "Twilight Zone: The Movie," where star Vic Morrow was killed.

"Oh, thank you very much," White smiles under his Spawn makeup.

"I knew Michael when...," Leguizamo starts a mock lament. "He was such a promising actor."

Suddenly, Leguizamo screams to White: "Watch out!"

White flinches and ducks, falling for Leguizamo's fake warning. Laughter spills throughout the stage—clearly, there's no filming going on. White then mimics Violator's robotic gyrations.

McFarlane, like everyone else, smiles at the shenanigans. But, with the initial thrill of seeing the Violator come to life now over, he begins to cast a more serious, creative eye. He and Wanda discuss the puppet's relaxed jaw and notice the teeth are very neat and organized. "I wanted crocodile teeth," McFarlane says. "Crooked."

Director Mark Dippé often consults with McFarlane on the scenes shot in "Spawn."

11:40 A.M.: Spawn's creator takes a short walk to Stage 7 for another interview. This one, taped with camera and back-lighting, serves two purposes: it will be used by New Line in electronic press kits and will be part of a "Making of Spawn" special. McFarlane takes the microphone and puts it under his sweatshirt and plops down in front of the camera. The screen won't reveal the green letters on the director's-style chair:

"Todd McFarlane, Executive Producer."

"I've got an opinion about everything," McFarlane tells the interviewer. "You throw out the question, I'll give you whatever you

McFarlane gives Michael Jai White (right, as Spawn) a few acting lessons...

want. Should I look at you or the camera?"

"Me's fine," says the interviewer, who then asks McFarlane about the history of his creation, his thoughts of the film and about a dozen questions total.

McFarlane's energy comes off well on the nearby monitor. He uses the word "again" too frequently, but his answers, complemented with hand gestures, are perfect for the sound-bitish nature of these things.

"He's done a lot of these interviews," says Wanda, standing off to the side. "He's pretty comfortable in these situations."

12:27 P.M.: Back to the set, McFarlane discusses with Dippé the possibilities of being in a scene that day. If it happens, it probably won't be until late in the day, and he'll send Wanda home to be with the couple's two children.

1:05 P.M.: McFarlane is sidetracked by a construction worker, who brings him into the office for some autographs. The office is like a Spawn shrine, with every issue of the comic series ringed around the walls.

Fortunately, McFarlane is prepared with a gold pen for the many signing requests he gets around the set. "See how it's the same signature on the toy box," he says, pointing the pen to the McFarlane Toys logo in the corner. "People understand that."

Before leaving, McFarlane asks if he can grab a couple of pieces of chewing gum out of a jar in the office. The crew members, delighted with their autographs, cheerfully oblige.

1:31 P.M.: McFarlane joins Producer Clint Goldman on a remote site of the stage, which has a video monitor tapped into the set proceedings.

McFarlane agrees that the planned August release of "Spawn" can be a good thing with "Batman and Robin" and "Lost World," the "Jurassic Park" sequel, looming as competition in the early summer. He notes that late-summer releases such as "Mortal Kombat" and "Seven" did very well at the box office in 1995.

Goldman, who could be mistaken for McFarlane's brother, shows McFarlane the industry trailer for the film. The trailer gives the feel of a high-octane action film, with a manic Leguizamo as Clown and a slickly evil Martin Sheen as Jason Wynn, who tells Al Simmons, "see you in Hell," and sets him afire.

The trailer ends with a computer-generated Violator poised over Spawn and then the burning Spawn logo. Goldman describes the challenges of the days ahead, trying to film battle scenes involving Violator and Spawn, and the movie's finale, which will be set in a "virtual Hell."

McFarlane, chewing away at his gum, seems impressed with the trailer. There's one thing still bugging him...

"It bothers me that we've got a monster with good teeth," he says and Goldman nods, acknowledging his executive producer has a problem.

McFarlane grabs a reporter's notebook and black pen and makes two sketches of the Violator's mouth. He wants the monster's teeth not only to be crooked, but come in at different angles and be of different sizes.

McFarlane takes the sketches back to the set to show Dippé, who calls in a makeup artist to discuss what can be done.

Asked if anything can changed about the teeth, McFarlane shows a rare flare of anger. "They're looking at it," he snaps.

2:56 P.M.: The crew breaks, and McFarlane bumps into D.B. Sweeney, who plays Terry Fitzgerald in the film. Both McFarlane and Sweeney love hockey and they talk about Jeremy Roenick, formerly of the Chicago Blackhawks and now with McFarlane's local team, the Phoenix Coyotes.

Sweeney tells McFarlane how much his relatives love the Violator action figures. McFarlane turns the conversation to how cheap the current sports action figures are. McFarlane shows Sweeney the three basic baseball poses—no matter who the player is—and laments how no consideration is made to the player's appearance.

Leaving the stage to go see dailies—the previous day's filming—McFarlane talks to Sweeney about playing some ball together. He recalls the 30-and-over baseball tournament from the previous week. "There was a pitcher who played for the Rangers for five years," he tells Sweeney. "Tall guy."

"Thirty minutes ago, it was four years," laughs Wanda, who's heard McFarlane

...who puts them to good use.

spin a tale or two in their 17 years together.

3:05 P.M.: Reaching the CFI Film Processing Laboratory Building, McFarlane momentarily gets lost before finding Projection Room 5 to see some dailies. The room is like a mini-theater, with a control board in the back.

McFarlane lets Wanda take the only chair open in the darkness and leans against the wall in the back left corner.

Scenes from the previous day's shooting are shown, one after another. They include scenes of street kid Zack's father dying on a hospital stretcher after an attack by Violator, and some dialogue between Cogliostro and Spawn after Spawn has been impaled on a fence.

From left: McFarlane, Leguizamo as the Clown, White and director Dippé.

Then come the rats. Lots of rats scampering around in second unit footage. So many rats that it gets boring and rat jokes begin flying. "Oh, you dirty rats," laughs one crew member.

But before the crew goes back to the set, there is test footage of Spawn's "smooth" suit, which looks similar to the Batman film costumes. McFarlane isn't too sure he wants the suit in the film.

"It looks too clean. It looks too pretty," McFarlane says. "We have this nice organic look going, then, it's like all of a sudden, he's a superhero."

McFarlane leaves the building, but notices something on the wall.

"Cool poster," he says.

It's from "The Crow: City of Angels."

3:30 P.M.: McFarlane hooks up with *Entertainment Weekly* reporter Tom Russo, a frequent contributor to *Wizard*, and stops by the food trailer for lunch. "He would not be eating if I hadn't reminded him," Wanda sighs.

McFarlane carries his food over to the office of Publicist Deborah Wuliger, where he can conduct the interview and then go through slides to select what he would like prints of to send back to his office.

While answering questions, McFarlane eats his lunch and signs a bunch of toys and comics on the table in front him. Four times during the interview, fans knock on the door for additional signatures, including a wide-eyed youngster who looks like he's just met Santa Claus.

The interview's theme is the phenomenon of Spawn and how McFarlane built his empire. McFarlane stresses the importance of the movie being rated PG-13 and then outlines his plan on how the August release will be a box-office success.

He figures the Spawn universe, through either the comics or the toys, has touched one million people who will see the film. They will bring either a date or a friend—that will mean two million viewers. At seven bucks a pop, that's $14 million.

McFarlane figures New Line can bring in $6 million more for the opening week through advertising. "That means $20 million and should get us a sequel," he says.

5:05 P.M.: The interview ends, and McFarlane turns his attention to the pile of 100 or so sleeves of slides he wants to go through.

"For two reasons," he says. "One, for the toys. Two, for conventions and seminars. I can go, 'Here's what Martin Sheen looks like as Jason Wynn.' It's for show."

McFarlane looks at the slides on a light table and uses a red grease pencil to put an "X" in the corners of the ones he wants printed. Wanda writes down the slide numbers for reference.

As he looks over contact sheets, McFarlane can't help but be impressed with some of the shots of White's Spawn. "He gives you that glare and it is intense," he says approvingly.

Wanda calls home and checks on the kids. Still unsure of the evening plans, McFarlane sends her back to the set to see if he'll be staying late to appear in a scene.

Walking out of the office, McFarlane notes the set blueprints on the walls in the hallway. "I'd like to get my hands on those," he says. "It would be something cool to show people."

5:50 P.M.: It's back to the set, but McFarlane stops at his car first. He opens the trunk, and pulls out two large boxes. They contain Spawn hats to give to the crew.

He arrives on the set and places the two boxes in a corner. He spends the next half hour mostly off the set, talking to Wanda.

It's finally resolved. For McFarlane to appear in the film, he would have to be involved in a shoot Thursday. He and Wanda prepare to stay overnight.

7:20 P.M.: The day's a wrap. Dippé is talking to Sweeney outside Stage 5 about his shooting schedule when McFarlane strolls up.

Lots of ideas, not all entirely serious, are passed about how McFarlane should appear in the film. At one point, he was going to be signing bottles in the background of the alley. At another, he'd be drawing something and show it to Zack, the street kid. Now, it appears Spawn will fall on top of some of the cardboard "homes," and McFarlane will pop out of one.

McFarlane jokes that he should not appear in the film at all and then stage a contest for fans to find him, sort of a perverse "Where's Waldo?"

Dippé regrets not having much time to talk to McFarlane throughout the day. "I show him everything; Todd's got great ideas," he says. Dippé tells McFarlane he should be back around nine the next morning to be safe.

One more thing, McFarlane remembers, before calling it a day. He's concerned about the box of Spawn hats he left on the set.

"Don't worry, they'll be locked up," Dippé says. McFarlane nods.

So, the next day the crew will be wearing a lot of hats. And, as McFarlane likes to say, all of them will say Spawn.

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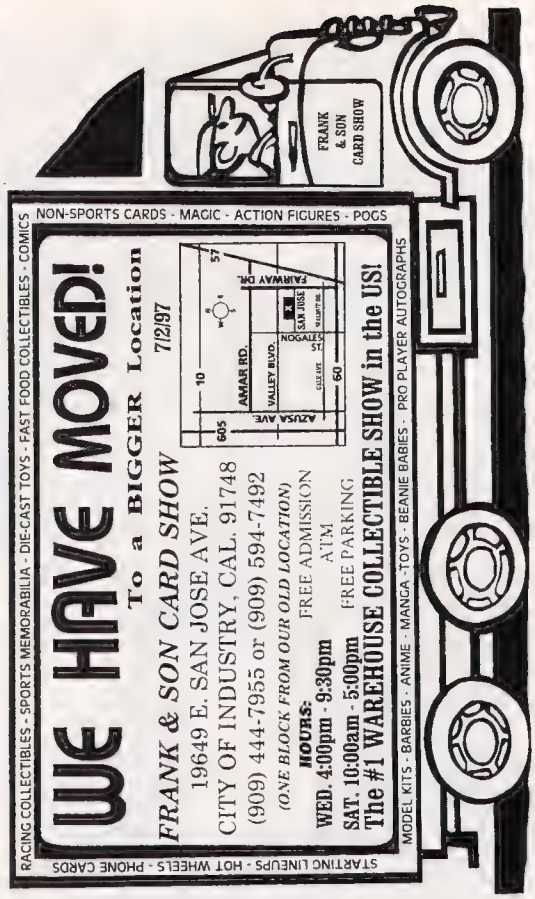

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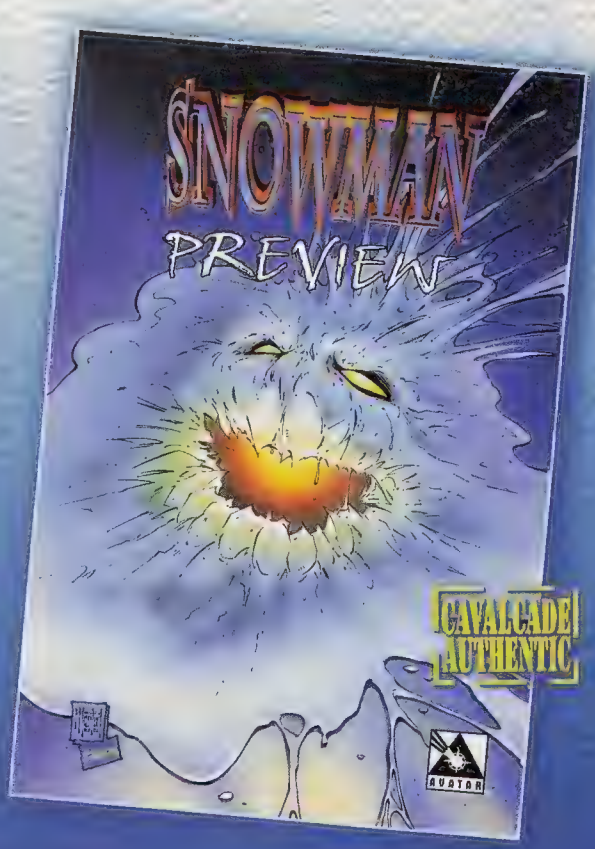


MASKED MEN

'Wizard' uncovers the secrets behind the many faces of 'Spawn'

The Clown (top) and Spawn when their makeup is all done.

The Clown has never had it this good. The rotund nemesis of the "Spawn" live-action movie has just morphed back from being the Violator, where he's done some nasty damage. He's impaled a struggling Spawn on an alley fence, and has changed back so he can gleefully goad and gloat.

In other words, Clown is going to get in the face of Spawn. But, before John Leguizamo, who plays Clown, and Michael Jai White, who plays Spawn, confront each other on the set, they have to—as all adversaries must—put on their best game faces.

And that isn't easy.

Both actors go through extensive early afternoon makeup preparation before filming the alley scene. Even three-quarters of the way through production and with more than 90 of these makeup sessions between them, it still takes Leguizamo nearly three hours and White an hour to achieve the look of their comics counterparts. And that's fast—in the early days of production, it would take longer.

By the time they're made up, both White and Leguizamo have their heads and faces covered in latex, glue and makeup paint. The process certainly isn't comfortable. It tests the patience—and sometimes the endurance—of the actors, who usually remain made up the rest of the working day.

"It being Tuesday, it's not as bad as if it were Friday," says White of his burnt-face Spawn look, known as "Hamburger Head" around the set. "When it's several days in a row, it can get to you more.

"It gets rough. Sometimes when it gets really humid and the whole crew is working and fanning themselves and complaining about the heat...It's times like that there is a constant reminder of how hot I am [with this stuff on]."

"I don't know if you could ever imagine what it's like," says Greg Funk of KNB Makeup, who works on Leguizamo this day. "It's like having a towel wrapped tightly around your head 14 hours a day. John is amazingly professional; he puts up with so much and jokes through the pain."

Wizard was granted access to the makeup trailer to watch this phase of movie magic, the lull before the on-set storm. As manic as Leguizamo acts as Clown, he is as serene during the process to achieve the character's look.

When we arrive at the makeup trailer in the early afternoon, Leguizamo, wearing a V-neck T-shirt and black jeans, is positioned in one of the two barber shop-style chairs. He already has his Clown head glued on like a cowl around his face, as he's been in the trailer for about a half-hour. The bald, latex head is meticulously pre-painted an egg color with small blue veins, hair stubble and ugly red rashes around the ears. Maintaining consistency in the look of the characters throughout the production is important, and the latex pieces are made a day—or more—in advance.

By Rob Allstetter • Photos by Peter Iovino

The brightly lit trailer is cluttered, but organized with tricks of the trade: grease paints, acrylic paints, markers, glues, powders, brushes, hair dryers and various foam latex pieces. Near a bust of the Clown on a counter is a reference snapshot of a fully made-up Leguizamo with the words, "Hey little girl, want some candy?" jokingly scribbled in ink at the bottom of the frame.

This session with Leguizamo is a little different, and perhaps a little more awkward, than previous ones. Funk usually works with KNB's Dave Anderson, but Anderson couldn't make it this day because of the Malibu fires near his home. Norman Cabrero, who was involved in the original sculpture of the makeup pieces, is helping out, essentially doing what Funk would normally do with Anderson.

Although Leguizamo frequently plays hip-hop music, taking breaks from the sessions for impromptu dances, today the radio is tuned to "101.9, L.A.'s finest rock." Songs from Sheryl Crow, The Who and Dire Straits match the tempo of the straightforward, workmanlike atmosphere in the trailer. There's little talking as a focused Funk constantly adjusts and readjusts his work.

Funk maneuvers Leguizamo's chair, dropping the head back.

"That okay?" he asks Leguizamo.

"Hmmm, hmmm," Leguizamo replies in the affirmative.

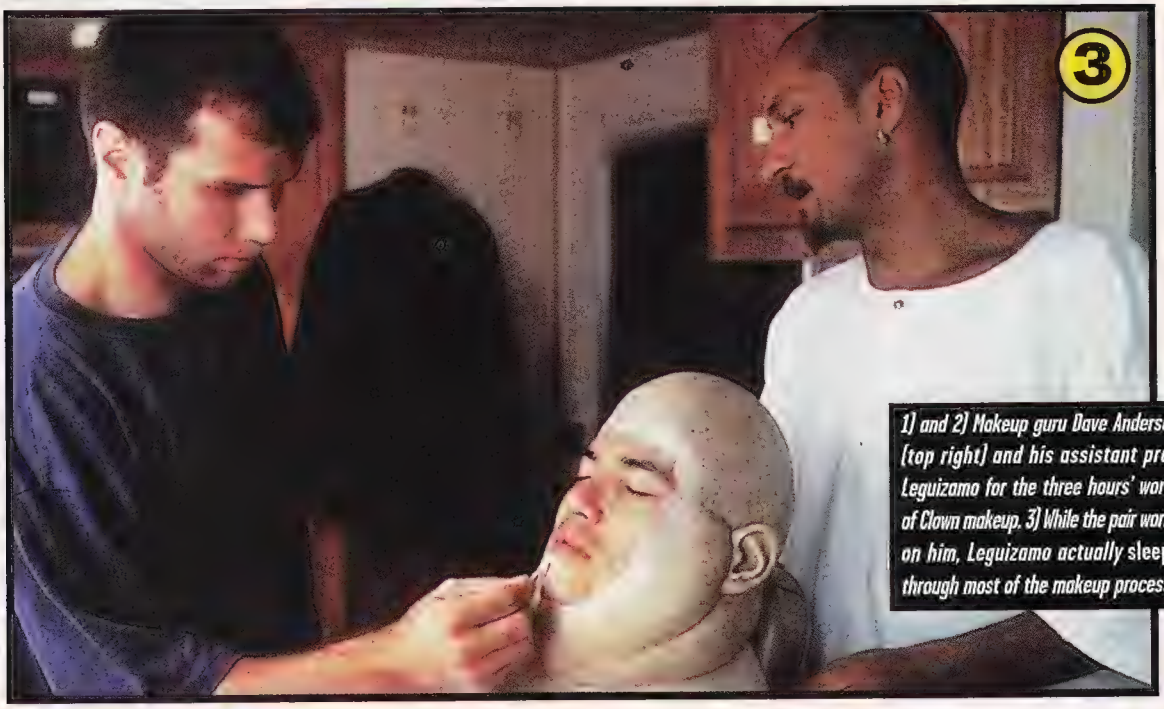
Those are the last "words" heard from Leguizamo for more than an hour; the actor, used to this routine, folds his hands, closes his eyes and actually falls asleep as Funk and Cabrero work on him.

"He just goes out like a light," Funk says later. "Fortunately, he can do that."

Using a clear, syrupy glue, Funk puts on Clown's blue chin piece next, beginning from the bottom of the chin to Leguizamo's lower lip. The nose and cheeks piece is next, and then the forehead and eyebrows.

Each piece is carefully patted into place. Funk gets in close to do his job but is always taking a step back to evaluate what he's done.

"Probably the toughest physical part is putting appliances on so they are seamless," says Funk, who worked on similar jobs on the television series "Babylon 5." "You have to fix any bad edge. It's precise. You really have to concentrate on very small details."



1) and 2) Makeup guru Dave Anderson (top right) and his assistant prep Leguizamo for the three hours' worth of Clown makeup. 3) While the pair works on him, Leguizamo actually sleeps through most of the makeup process!

Using a sponge and his own hand as a palette, Funk dabs blue paint on Leguizamo's upper lip area, the only exposed skin left, to match the color of the latex piece. Funk takes a break to eat lunch right in the trailer, and Cabrero uses a black magic marker for the outline part of Clown's face. He then touches up the blue areas around the black with a brush.

KNB's Howard Berger, who will be working on White, enters the trailer and engages in shop talk, discussing the licensed Halloween masks from the film and the upcoming shooting schedule, which is taped to one of the mirrors and includes days that White and Leguizamo need to be made up.

Leguizamo finally stirs, opening his eyes. Funk, finished with lunch, uses an air brush to tweak and blend the colors and make them uniform.

Berger sets up for White. "We're going to be using a light, light glue today," he says. "We know what the scenes are and he's not going to be sweating a lot. We can get away with a lot more with a burn makeup than what John is wearing."

White arrives in the trailer. He takes off his teal tank-top, puts on a white T-shirt, sits in the chair next to Leguizamo and plops a video tape into the VCR/television in front of him. The tape contains dailies of a scene between the two actors in which Clown tells Spawn that he's actually dead.

"Remember this?" White says to Leguizamo, laughing. "You sat on my arm!"

"I sat on your arm?!" Leguizamo beings to perk up as White replays the scene. The tone in the trailer lightens immensely, and it becomes apparent the hard part is over.

"It's going to be a good scene," White says, and Leguizamo smirks in agreement, sipping Evian water through a straw as Funk glues on Clown's white hair pieces.

Funk then fills a Trojan condom with water and sticks it underneath the neck of Leguizamo's Clown cowl. The condom fills in the gap between the mask and below the chin. "Helps, doesn't it?"

"I think it does," Leguizamo says. "A little more."

Funk then adds about an inch-and-a-

4) A water-filled condom is used to fill the gap between underneath Leguizamo's chin and the mask.
5) Makeup artists sweat Clown's details by dabbing on paint and even touching up with the marker.
Opposite: 6) White only endured an hour's worth of makeup art, applied by Greg Nicotero and his assistant. 7) Like Leguizamo, White also sleeps. 8) When latex is glued to skin, the glue can create a "burning sensation."

6

half more water to a new condom and fits it in place. "A trade secret," he laughs later.

Before work begins on White, a crew member steps into the trailer, pulling some Flintstones vitamins out of his apron and handing a pair to him.

"Did I get a Bam-Bam today?" White smiles, looking at the color chewables in his hand. "Nope, that's Dino...and a Wilma. Hey, I've got a headache, can you get some Advil?"

Another crew member then arrives and helps put in red contact lenses in Leguizamo's eyes. Eyeliner is then applied, and Leguizamo leaves the trailer for wardrobe, where he will put on his fat suit and Clown "duds."

7

"Thanks," he says, looking quite odd with his full Clown face but normal body. Funk leaves, too, and will follow Leguizamo around for the entire day's shoot to do touch-ups.

That leaves White, who is now watching an old black-and-white film on the television.

The Spawn face, scarred brown and black, goes on White in a similar fashion to Clown's on Leguizamo, except it covers White entirely except for openings around the mouth and eyes.

The process for Spawn is also simpler than the one for Clown. The head and forehead are glued on first, followed by the neck, chin and face pieces.

White says he feels a similar rubbing on his face that created discomfort before. "It felt like it did before," he tells Berger, who tinkers with the glue and the pieces, slowly pulling them off and putting them back on to try to make White more comfortable.

"You can wear makeup only so much," Berger says. "When you keep applying glue to real skin, it develops a burning sensation. It can only be rubbed raw only so often."

With all the pieces in place, there are two-inch white seams where the pieces come together. Berger takes a brush and brown paint to eliminate them, again giving the appliance ensemble a uniform look.

"With makeup, it's always a mechanical thing," Berger says. "We're doing the exact same thing, so we're able to fly through it now. Seriously, we dream about this in our sleep. We've done this makeup

8

9] White admits the latex is "confining at times." 10] "Time to work."

over 30 times. The first day, it took three hours. Now, we've got it down to 45 minutes.

"That's less time in the chair, less time in makeup for [White]. Although we are never really in a rush. We take the time to do it the right way."

Finished, Berger nudges White a couple of times, but, like Leguizamo, White falls asleep, too. A noise outside finally awakens him.

White checks himself out in the mirror and touches his face. Even now, the transformation intrigues him.

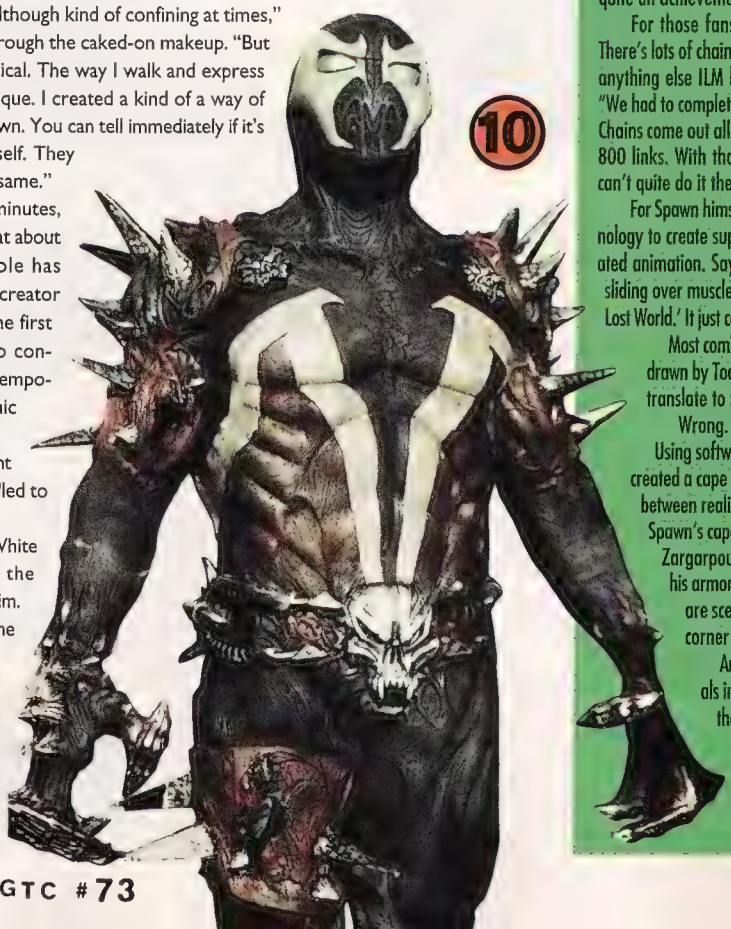
"It is interesting, although kind of confining at times," he admits, speaking through the caked-on makeup. "But the acting is very physical. The way I walk and express myself physically is unique. I created a kind of a way of movement just for Spawn. You can tell immediately if it's a stunt double or myself. They don't quite move the same."

With a few free minutes, White continues to chat about how rigorous the role has been, meeting Spawn creator Todd McFarlane for the first time at the San Diego convention and how contemporary Spawn is as a comic book character.

That train of thought is broken when he's called to the set to rehearse.

"Time to work," White says, getting up from the chair. And you believe him. After all, he's got his game face on.

Rob Allstetter is amazed how these guys with all this makeup on don't go postal at the end of a long shoot.



F/X-Men

The guys at Industrial Light and Magic have gone to Hell and back. Using state-of-the-art technology, the special effects crew has transformed *Spawn*, one of the coolest looking comics around, into "Spawn," a live-action film spectacle. Heading up the project are Christophe Hery and Habib Zargarpour, ILM's associate visual effects supervisors, and veterans of such eye-popping features as "The Mask," "Star Trek: First Contact" and "Jumanji," who have combined standard and computer-generated animation into a frightfest for the eyes.

Everyone will be talking about the Violator effects on their way out of the theater, says Hery. "Everything drips from its body—goo, lots of saliva and some kind of gross thing it's spitting out," he says. "This creature's wet."

The monster undergoes two startling transformations, first from a clown into Violator and then back again. Hery adds, "It's a very violent shot where you see different limbs bursting out. It's pretty grotesque." This particular sequence, a piece-by-piece 3-D transformation, is over five times longer than your average special effect, and shot by a rotating camera. "That means we couldn't cheat," says Hery. "We couldn't do any morphing, because morphing is too easy. We had to shoot it from every angle. That was quite an achievement."

For those fans of Spawn's chains, worry not. There's lots of chains in this movie, and they're unlike anything else ILM has ever done. Says Zargarpour, "We had to completely reinvent techniques to do that. Chains come out all over the place, and there's about 800 links. With that number of links involved, you can't quite do it the old-fashioned way."

For Spawn himself, ILM utilized cutting-edge technology to create supremely detailed computer-generated animation. Says Zargarpour, "You can see skin sliding over muscle. The technology was used in 'The Lost World.' It just came out and we benefited from it."

Most comic fans probably assumed the capes drawn by Todd McFarlane in *Spawn* could never translate to the silver screen.

Wrong.

Using software of his own design, Zargarpour created a cape effect that "stays within the range between realism and surrealism." In this movie, Spawn's cape can do just about anything. Says Zargarpour, "It's basically an extension of his armor. He can stop a truck with it. There are scenes where the cape turns into the corner of a wall and hides him."

And much like how McFarlane's visuals in *Spawn* set new artistic standards, the ILM pair are hopeful their work will do the same for the film. "We wanted it to be really different," says Zargarpour. "I think we achieved that." ■ *Scott Brick*

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THIS OFFER EXPIRES OCTOBER 16, 1997.

I Was A 'Spawn' Movie Extra

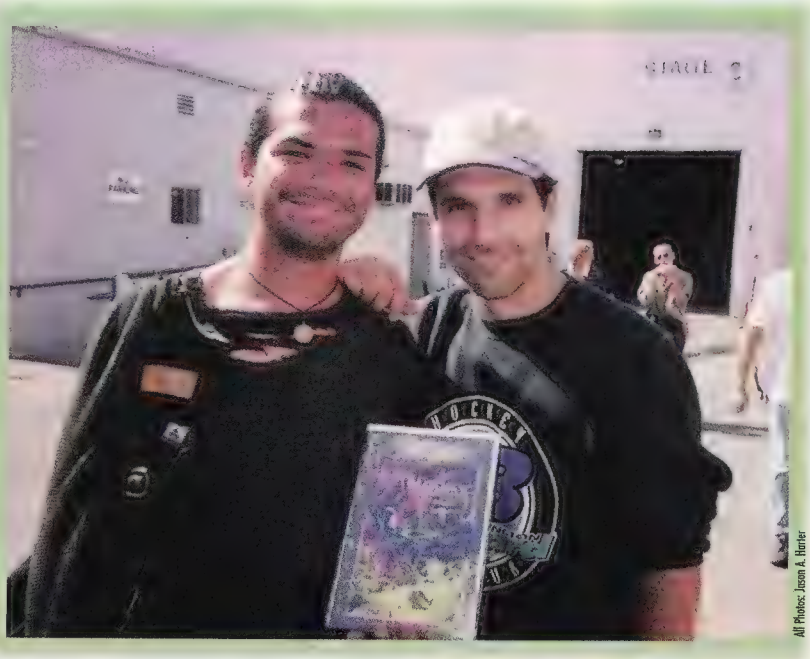
Or how I got paid $79 a day to look dirty and put oatmeal in my hair

By Jason A. Harter

I'm a bum. Literally. I haven't washed my hair in nine days and I'm covered in dirt. And, truth be known, I couldn't be happier.

Y'see, one morning last spring, instead of waking up to my civilian identity of a 22-year-old comic addict trying to make a humble living in the entertainment industry, I woke to a call from my casting agent. He told me to hustle to a local warehouse for a fitting. If I could look scummy, I'd get to be a "Spawn" movie extra.

I reported to a huge warehouse where three casting agents tried some of the dirtiest, ugliest clothes they could find on me. I already had the look they were searching for—scruffy beard, long hair. I was scummy enough. I arrived at the Hollywood Center Studio at 7 a.m. the next day to be an extra for nine days' worth of shooting scenes in "the alley" for "Spawn."



All Photos: Jason A. Harter

Me and the man himself, Todd McFarlane, who signed my copy of Spawn #50. (I'm the guy with more stubble.)

It's wild! My first day, John Leguizamo, who plays the Clown, walks by while I'm on my way to the makeup trailer and he's on his way to Stage 5. He looks crazy with half his makeup on, wearing a terry cloth robe as three hair and makeup people primp him as he strolls. Later, Michael Jai White—Spawn himself—passes by wearing the Spawn costume from the waist up...and a pair of khaki leisure slacks below. I try to say "hi," but he looks lost in the melodies of the headphones he's wearing.

I get to the makeup trailer where they tell me my look is going to be dark, wet and filthy. So they smear dirt, oatmeal and henna in my hair and on my face. It's part of the job. I'm guaranteed $79 a day for looking scummy, and with overtime, I can clear more. I'm allowed to shower at the end of the shooting day, but I'm not supposed to wash my hair. And I won't. I know that if I do, the makeup people will retaliate and put *more* stuff on me the next day.

After a long day of shooting (Overtime! About $120!), I report back the next day. There are about 20 extras getting made up and four or five makeup people at work at all times. They can get us in and out in about 10 minutes each,

and now that we've been there a day, we all know each other and it's very laid back. I make my way to Stage 9, where I scope the Violator.

Oh, man. He's at least 7-feet-tall—when he's on his knees, that is. There are actually three Violators. One is basically a huge stick puppet, one is the animatronic technological number and the last is a waist-up model with more articulated features that they use for close-ups. All three are very detailed and very…intimidating. I was standing in front of the animatronic one, about six inches from his teeth, and I swear he snarled. No kidding.

I spend several days laying in an alley in a puddle of water looking like a bum. Then on my eighth day, the unfathomable moment comes. We're on a lunch break and I'm peeling back the wrapper of a Milky Way when I see a guy who looks like Todd McFarlane standing by the food truck. He looks a little shorter and scruffier than I expected, but I'm pretty sure it's him. I descend upon him and sure enough—it's McFarlane! I start asking him all sorts of fanboy questions and he's actually incredibly laid back and incredibly nice. Whatever I ask, he doesn't give me some, "Sorry, that's secret information" answer. He spills all the dirt on the *Spawn* comic, the HBO animated series and his upcoming toy lines. We eat lunch together and talk for about half an hour. He definitely didn't come across like Million Dollar McFarlane. He just seemed like a nice, regular guy.

Alley shots wrapped after day nine, and I walked away richer in a lot of ways. I pocketed some money, got to have a great conversation with one of my comic gods, and oh yeah—I'm on film! I made it into two scenes: The first time Al Simmons sees the alley? That's me holding the sopping wet newspaper. And the scene where the Violator throws Spawn on some poor bum underneath a pile of cardboard in the alley? I'm that poor bum. Look for me! Who knows? Maybe if enough people see the flick, I'll get a cut of the box office. Then again, maybe not.

Jason A. Harter used to put oatmeal in his hair when he was a kid and his mom yelled at him. Now he gets paid for it. Is this a great country or what?

Top: Here I am with a Spawn stunt double. Above: That 7-foot-tall animatronic Violator really creeped me out. Right: An empty Spawn costume—wish I got to wear one.

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Deadline is September 30, 1997.

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No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, New Line Cinema, Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. and Immortal Records and their immediate families. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Spawn Movie Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1997.** New Line Cinema, McFarlane Toys, Todd McFarlane Productions, Inc. and Wizard Press are participating sponsors and assume no liability in connection with this contest. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected randomly from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Winning entries will be selected on October 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after October 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Spawn Movie Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Spawn "Mega-Movie" Entry Form

DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30, 1997!

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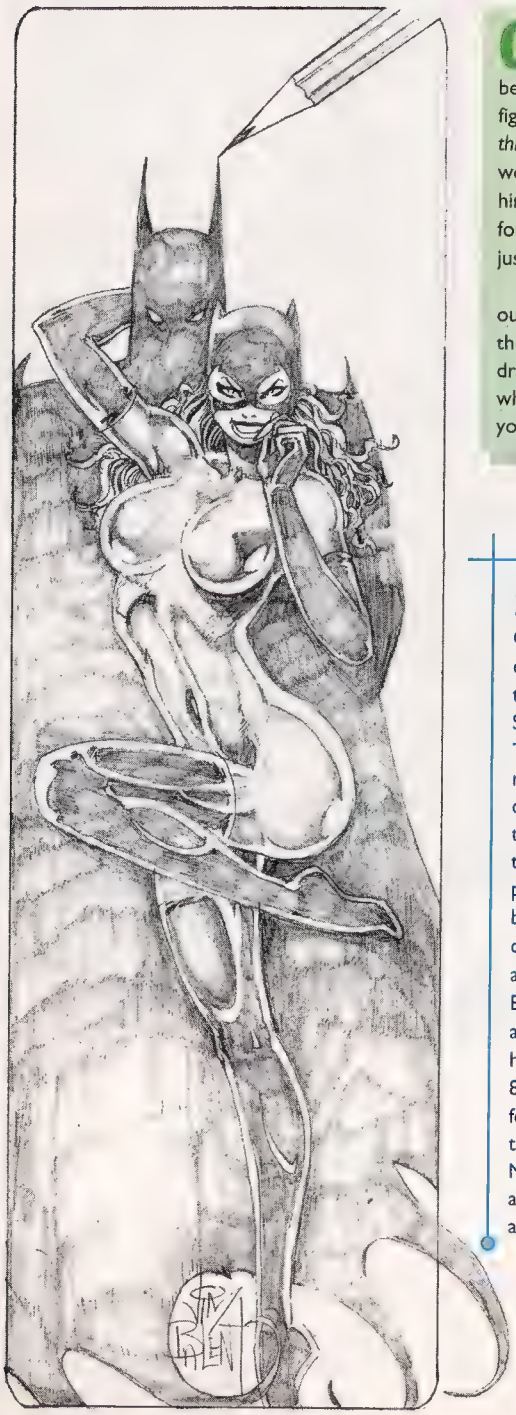
Basic Training

this month's host: Jim Balent

How to Draw Basic Body Structure



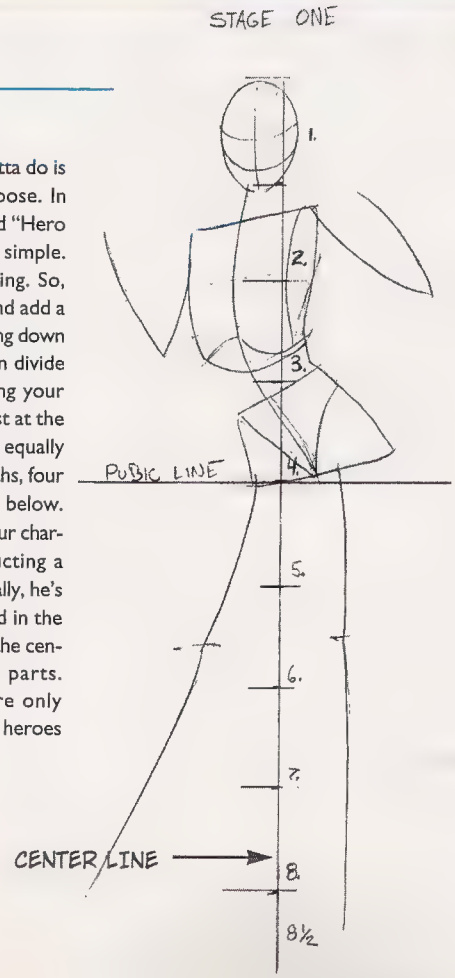
Greetings, fellow artists! You may remember me from *Wizard* #61's "Basic Training," titled "How to Construct a Woman." Well, I'm back, and today I'll be giving you the basic steps in how to draw the female and male figure. Now I know what you're probably saying: "Oh no, not *this* guy again! Isn't he the same guy that always draws Catwoman's boobs too big?! We'll *never* learn anything from him!" Well, with that attitude, you probably won't! But for those of you willing to learn, I'm going to show you just how to draw your basic comic book bodies.

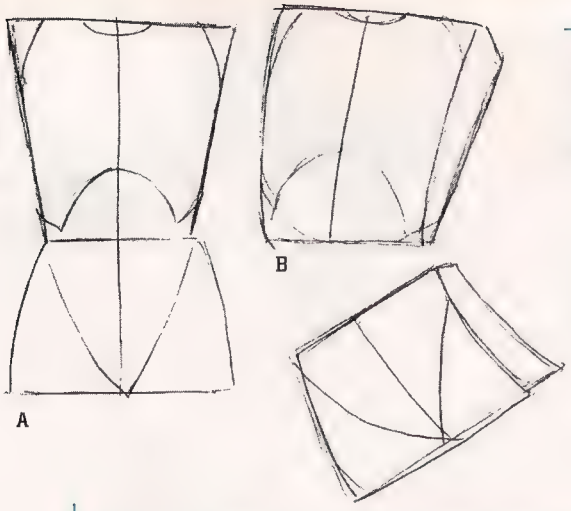
Al Ortega

Let me just say that there are a number of methods out there on how to draw a figure; this is only one of them. If you ask 10 different artists out there how to draw a leg, you'll probably get 10 different answers. So see what fits you best and keep practicing. But for now, sharpen your pencils, turn on some music and let's draw!!

Strike a Pose

Okay, the first thing you've gotta do is decide on your character's pose. In this case, we'll use the standard "Hero Stance," just to make things simple. Then it's time to start drawing. So, rough in a block mannequin and add a center line (a vertical line running down the length of your hero). Then divide the center line in half, creating your pubic line, which should hit just at the bottom of your pelvis. Next, equally divide the center line into eighths, four above the pubic line and four below. Each unit is about the size of your character's head. We're constructing a hero who is 8 heads high (actually, he's 8 1/2 heads high when you add in the feet); that's why you broke up the center line into eight different parts. Normal, everyday people are only about 6 heads high, while most heroes are 8 1/2 heads high.





Twist and Shout

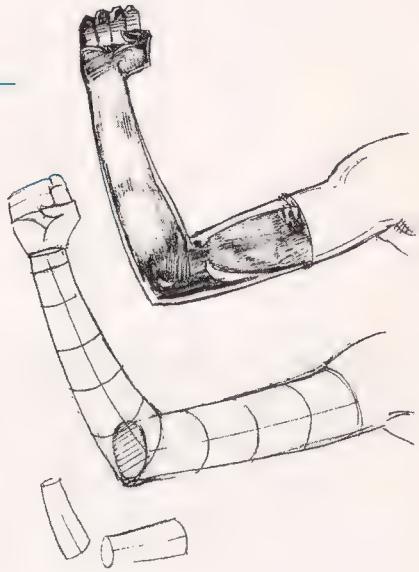
Now it's time to start defining your character a bit. Begin by roughing in the torso and pelvis. Figure A is a straight-on shot, to show you the basic shape you're looking for. We're going to choose a 3/4 stance for Catwoman, though, so we can see her side and front at the same time.

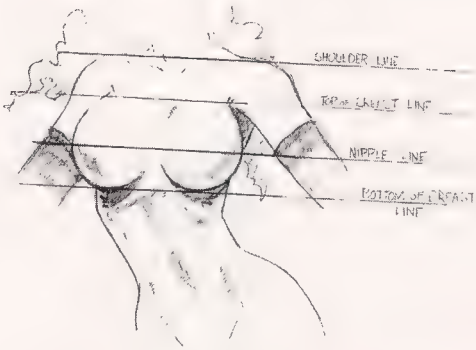
Important note: When drawing the female form, be sure to angle your shoulder line and pelvis line, as seen in Figure B. This will tilt the pelvis back and give you that shapely curve everyone seems to desire. Once the torso and pelvis are roughed in, I then define the planes on them by filling in the blocks to give the picture more of a 3-D look.

Out on a Limb

Stage two is where I begin to add more mass to the figure. An easy way to start drawing the arms is by using a tapered cylinder. First decide on how large and muscular your arms are going to be. (Since we're drawing Catwoman, a female comic hero, I suggest we keep the cylinders slender and not too muscular.) Attach your arms to small wrists and hands. When I'm drawing Catwoman I like to think of her hands and fingers as knives. This helps me to focus in on their design: long thin fingers like the blade of a stiletto!

The legs are tapered in the same way. When viewed from the side, they should have an "S" shape to them, and when viewed from the front, they have more of a "B" look, as seen below left. This will give your figure a sense of power and sex appeal.





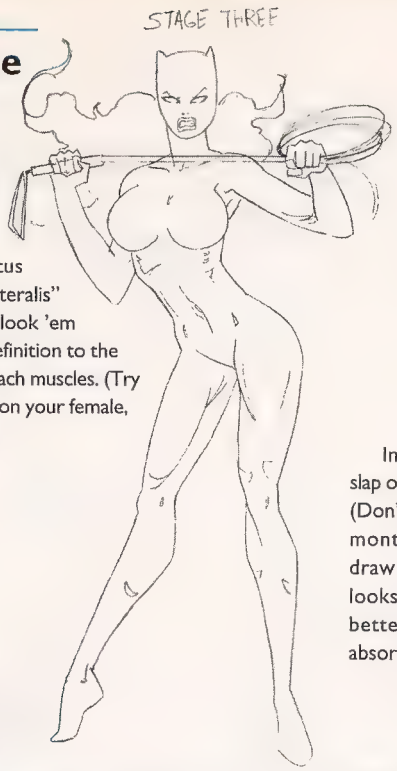
Bosom Buddies

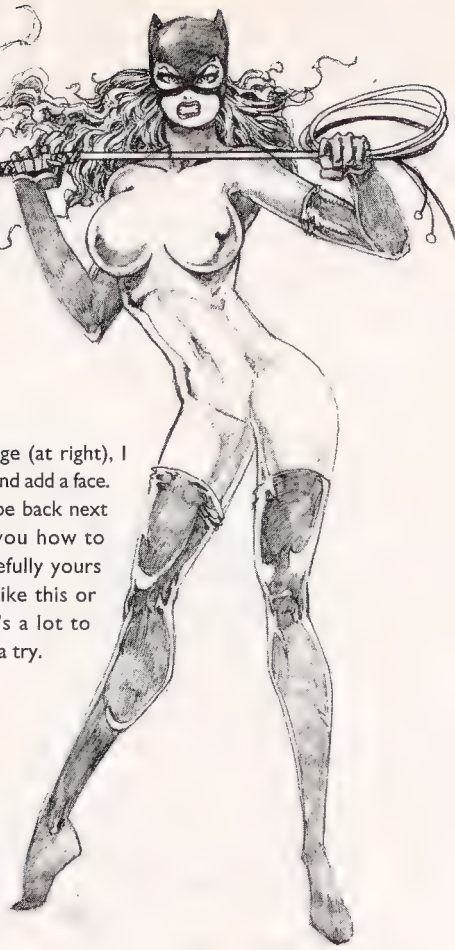
When drawing the breasts, always keep in mind that the shoulder line, nipple line and the bottom of the breasts should be parallel to each other. This will help keep your breasts in one place and prevent them from looking like they're wandering all over the body. Their size can be any size you want, big or small—it doesn't matter. As long as your lines are parallel, they should look wonderful.

Oh, sure, some artists might make their careers out of drawing breasts big, but that's only because they probably never got over the fact that they weren't breast-fed as a child, which has now grown into this weird obsession, where they…uh…sorry. Got a bit carried away there. Let's quickly jump to stage three, shall we?

Make a Muscle

Stage three is where I break out the anatomy books and add my muscles. You can best see them in the tense legs of Catwoman. Here, I've chosen to show the "rectus femoris," and the "vastus lateralis" and "vastus medialis." (Go look 'em up!) I've also added slight definition to the arms, chest, calves and stomach muscles. (Try not to render every muscle on your female, or she'll appear too bulky.)

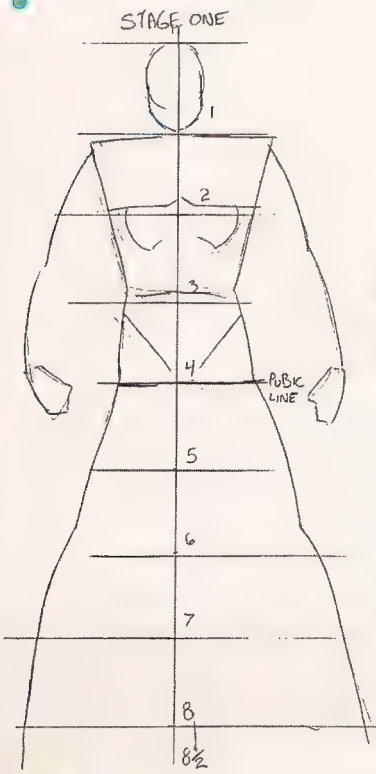


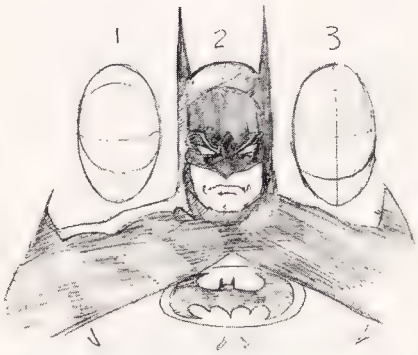


In the final stage (at right), I slap on a costume and add a face. (Don't worry, I'll be back next month to show you how to draw faces.) Hopefully yours looks something like this or better! I know it's a lot to absorb, but give it a try.

...But Guys are Different

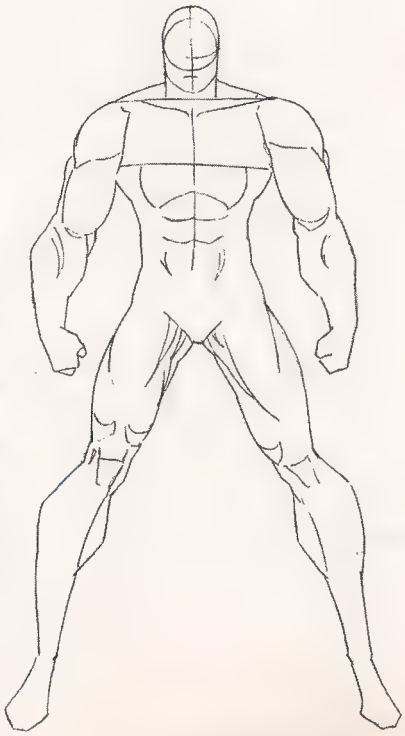
Now some of you out there are probably saying, "That's great, Jim, but can we use the same formula to draw a male hero?" Well…yes, but we'll have to make some small modifications. Stage one: Pick your nose. Oops! I mean, pick a pose. This time we'll use a straightforward shot, with no twist. Draw your guy 8 1/2 heads high, just like Catwoman. But think bulk now when roughing in the torso. You'll need to add more mass because he'll be carrying around a lot more muscle weight. Make sure he's got good broad shoulders, big enough so that three heads could sit on them, just like Batman's showing below. Although he doesn't look too happy about it.





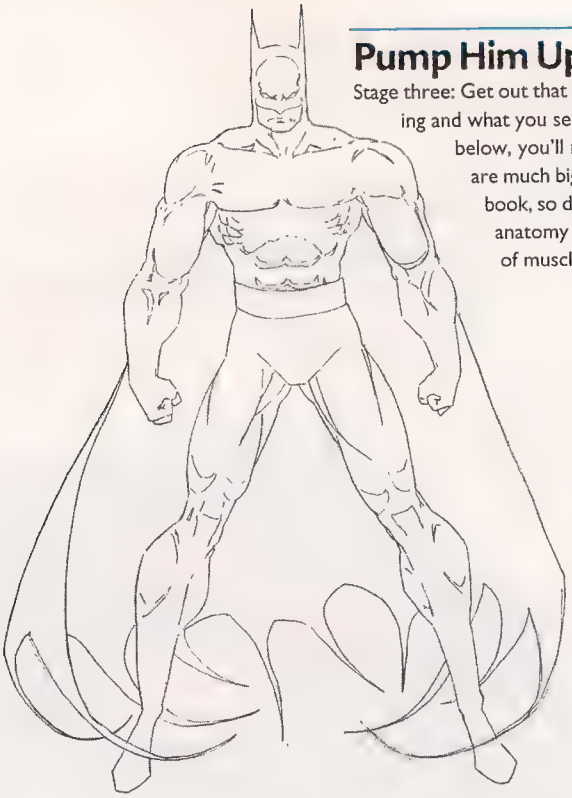
Adding Definition

Stage two: Round out those powerful arms and legs. Remember, he's a powerful male hero! Draw thicker muscles, bigger than Catwoman's. Larger wrists and hands too! Remember, the "S" and "B" shapes should still be in the legs, only they're bulkier. (Of course, the Batman example at the right only shows the "B" shape, because it's a straight-on shot.)



Pump Him Up

Stage three: Get out that anatomy book and define those muscles. Warning! What you're drawing and what you see in most anatomy books will be different. If you look at the two arms below, you'll note that they both have the same muscles, but the ones on the right are much bigger. That's because you're exaggerating the muscles from the anatomy book, so don't expect to see a photo of a 52-inch biceps in there! It's best to study anatomy books, muscle magazines and comics to get a good sense of the shape of muscles.



Anatomy Book Arm

Comic Book Arm

Final stage: Add a grimacing face and costume, and there you have it...Batman.

And that's how you construct your basic male and female body types. I hope you realize that artists spend years perfecting their craft, so don't feel bad if you can't draw a figure your first time out. Also, this is just the tip of the iceberg. Don't think that within these few pages lies everything you need to know about figure drawing. But hopefully this whetted your appetite and gave you a good basis to start from. Take figure drawing classes, talk to other artists, read books and draw, draw, draw. Now get to work, 'cause I'll be back next month to tell you all about drawing the human head! **W**

Jim Balent, whose sexy babes and beefy guys can be seen monthly within the pages of DC Comics' Catwoman, *is a tall guy. In our minds, he'll always be at least 8 1/2 heads tall.*

JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything in the world of comic-related merchandise

By David Borak and the *Wizard* Staff

GET YER BATARANGS HERE!

Now you can get your very own Bat-weapons, as Warner Bros. brings you recreations of actual props from the 1997 "Batman & Robin" movie. First, you can get yourself a chrome-plated, metal replica of Batman's Batarang stretching 8 1/2" X 3" long. Or get one of Robin's Throwing Birds, made of the same stuff as the Batarang plus some red metallic enamel paint and standing 11 3/4" X 5 1/2" long. These props come displayed in a museum quality wall-mountable case measuring 8" X 11" X 3" that opens so you can remove the prop. Limited to only 500 each, the Batarang sells for a whopping $425 and the Throwing Bird for $525. Look for 'em in a Warner Bros. Studio Store near you.

MONOPOLIZING THE BATCAVE

One thing Batman's always looking for is free parking for the Batmobile. Well, Warner Bros. is making that much easier with the special "Batman & Robin" edition of *Monopoly*! Now's your chance to own a piece of Gotham City with a new version of the classic board game tying in to the new "Batman & Robin" movie. The board comes designed with actual photos from the film, and the properties are Batman-themed. There's Wayne Manor, the Batcave and Dr. Woodrue's Lab, to name a few. The game pieces are updated with items like the Batmobile and the Bat-symbol (not the Bat-thimble, however), and the money is stamped with the City of Gotham seal of approval. You'll still find the same four corners of the board (GO, JAIL, FREE PARKING and GO TO JAIL) as in the classic version. *Batman & Robin Monopoly* is currently available at Warner Bros. Studio stores for $30.

BATGIRL'S A MODEL

Anyone remember the cool "Batgirl" theme music they used to play on the old 1960s "Batman" television show? Well, start humming that funky tune as you keep your eyes peeled this August for Horizon Hobbies' Batgirl Solid Model Kit. The figure is 1/8 scale, stands over eight inches tall and is one of the only licensed model kits ever produced of Batgirl! Complete with a base and logo nameplate, it sells for $99.95. And yes, you have to put it together and paint it yourself.

Batarang and Throwing Bird

COMIC COASTERS

Give your drink a colorful landing site with the new Creator's Coasters Set from Graphitti Designs. Each set includes 12 new designs that cover a wide range of cool creator-owned comics. You'll find three Bone designs by Jeff

Creator's Coasters

Smith, a three-piece Hellboy set by Mike Mignola, three Milk & Cheese coasters by Evan Dorkin, and three new designs by Mike Allred featuring Madman and Allred's newest creation: Red Rocket 7. Each 4-inch square coaster features full-color art on the front, with the appropriate logo printed in two-colors on the back. Help put the fun back in drinking this August for only $5.95 for the entire set. Catch these coasters at your local comic book shop.

Product of the Month

LADY DEATH'S ALL SHOOK UP

Remember those little snow globes you'd get in airport gift shops? Well, throw 'em away, because Chaos! Comics brings you the mother of 'em all: The Lady Death Snow Globe!

Standing a whopping 13 inches tall, a 5 1/2-inch globe is placed atop a giant castle base with nasty skulls all around. Inside the globe, you'll find two babes in an epic battle, as Lady Death and Purgatori duke it out. When you shake this baby, though, don't look for snow. Instead, you'll find giant bats swarming around those two ladies.

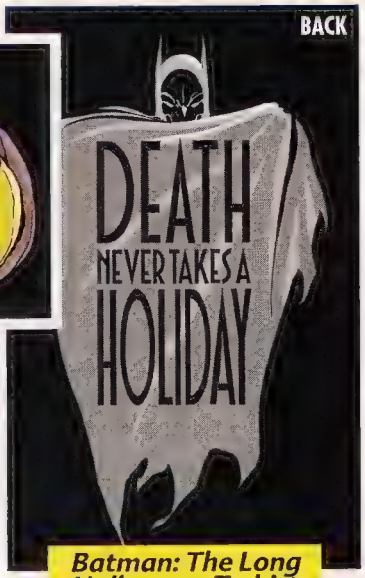
And if that weren't enough, this is also a musical snow globe—wind 'er up and you'll hear Richard Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries." Designed by Clayburn Moore, this beautiful snow globe sells for $159.95. Look for it in specialty shops this August.

DISHING OUT BAT-STUFF

Once again, the Warner Bros. Studio Store offers some really neat Bat products. First up is a special-edition plate featuring a scene from the "Batman: The Animated Series" episode "Harley and Ivy," with two of Batman's favorite female foes driving in a car just like Thelma and Louise. The plate is limited to only 2,500 copies and costs just $35.

And secondly, look for a limited-edition animation cel from "Batman: Subzero," an all-new animated movie coming straight to video this October. The cel features Mr. Freeze and his polar bear pets advancing on Robin and Batgirl, as yet unaware of Batman's timely entrance. The cel, limited to only 500, comes framed at 21" X 24" for $475. Both items are currently available at Warner Bros. Studio Stores. Call 1-800-4-WARNER for the store nearest you.

Harley & Ivy Special-Edition Plate



***Batman: The Long Halloween* T-shirt**

BATMAN: THE LONG T-SHIRT

If you haven't been reading Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's *Batman: The Long Halloween* series, pick it up! To celebrate this awesome series and the upcoming holiday, DC Comics and Graphitti Designs have joined forces

to bring you the *Batman: The Long Halloween* T-shirt. Featuring art by Tim Sale, the front of this black, 100 percent cotton shirt features the Batman pumpkin icon, while the back has Batman with the haunting holiday message, "Death Never Takes a Holiday." You'll find this shirt in specialty comic book shops in August for $17.95 (or two bucks extra for you pudgier XXL sizes).

HULK SMASH LUNCH

Even the Hulk stays away from cafeteria food at school. So bring your own lunch this school year, with Thermos' Incredible Hulk Lunch Kit! Hey, didn't these things used to be called lunchboxes? Anyway, it's made of durable plastic and features art from UPN's "Hulk" animated series. The "kit" contains a 10 oz. bottle made of shatterproof plastic. (Hmm...maybe Dr. Bruce Banner can figure out how this thing knows just how to keep cold things cold and hot things hot!) You can fit yer lunch inside with the thermos and head off to school. The Hulk Lunch Kit has a suggested retail price of $8.49, and you'll find it in retail stores everywhere this August.

Hulk Lunch Kit

Check your local stores for availability of all these funky fresh products. Or ask your friendly neighborhood comic store to special order 'em for ya!

HEY! Are you a company putting out some easy cheesin' good fun in the form of comic-related merchandise like *The Blob's Guide to Healthy Eating*, Mephisto's Five Alarm Chili and Aquaman's Sushi Making Kit? If so, we'd love to include 'em in our groovy "Junk Drawer" column. (Of course, we'd also like statues, T-shirts, novelties, magnets, etc.) Please send all info and sample products to:

Junk Drawer
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

JUNK DRAWER video games

By Steve Brown

FIGHTING FORCE APPROACHES

Well, companies are still keeping pretty tight lipped about all their new releases, saving them for E3. So expect some great announcements next month in our big E3 report. In the meantime, however, we've got a look at a few cool new games including a certain Force-related game you may be interested in...

Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi

MANUFACTURER: LucasArts
PLATFORM: Sony PlayStation
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $49.99, available November

How does a Star Wars 3-D fighting game sound? *Masters of Teräs Käsi* was developed in secrecy, and LucasArts planned to unveil it at this summer's big E3 show. But when word of the game leaked, instead of waiting and unveiling the game at the biggest video game convention of the year, LucasArts decided to go public with it.

Masters revolves around a new villain named Arden Lyn, the ultimate master of teräs käsi (the kung fu of the Star Wars Universe). Apparently, Darth Vader hired Lyn to kill all the Rebel leaders in hand-to-hand combat. This forces Han and the gang to learn teräs käsi to save their skins.

The game looks a lot like *Tekken 2* or *Virtua Fighter* — two 3-D warriors face each other in various combat arenas and punch, kick and throw their enemies until they can no longer stand. As characters fight, they build up "Force Power" which enables them to do special power moves. And each character has his own unique power attack.

Masters features three attack buttons and a kick button, enabling characters to either duke it out with their specific weapons or go mano-a-mano. And you should be pretty familiar with their weapons: Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader carry lightsabers, Princess Leia uses a staff, Boba Fett packs a blaster rifle, Chewbacca has a laser crossbow, etc. Battles are

Star Wars: Masters of Teräs Käsi

Blast Corps

Hexen

fought on a number of different sites and worlds including a shuttle platform on Endor, a Tusken Raider village and the Rancor Pit on Tatooine, as well as sites on Dagobah, Bespin, Hoth, the Emperor's Throne Room and a never-before-seen location.

As with *Tekken 2*, *Masters* allows players to play in various game modes. The game contains a Practice Mode, an Arcade Versus Mode and Team Mode, wherein players select a team of four characters to battle with.

At press time, LucasArts would not confirm the rumors that Darth Vader and a Tusken Raider are just a few of the hidden playable characters in the game, with Vader also rumored to be the final Boss.

Blast Corps

MANUFACTURER: Nintendo
PLATFORM: Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $59.99, available now

Blast Corps is a mission-based demolition simulation. Players control one of 12 different types of vehicles that are employed to clear (or shoot) a path for a runaway nuclear missile carrier. Fifty levels of lushly textured, highly detailed, interactive 3-D environments are the defining characteristics of this addictive classic.

Everything in *Blast Corps* is destroyable and there are a ton of secret areas to discover. Our favorite vehicle was the giant Infra Man-type mechanical robot who leaps hundreds of feet in the air and smashes everything in its descending path. *Corps* is a triumph of playability and superb graphics.

Hexen

MANUFACTURER: GT Interactive
PLATFORM: Nintendo 64
SUGGESTED RETAIL: $79.99, available now

While this *DOOM*-type, first-person perspective maze game is not original by any means, *Hexen* delivers a higher form of satisfaction than the first-person shooters it emulates.

Users control a warrior, mage or cleric, each coming with various strengths and weaknesses. Like *DOOM*, users travel through 3-D mazes, beating up on monsters and demons with various weapons and spells. Although not an official *Dungeons and Dragons* license, *Hexen* is the closest thing we've seen to a playable 3-D RPG.

With fairly easy controls, highly realistic graphics and imaginative and straightforward gameplay, *Hexen* has all the basic requirements of an excellent video game title. Nonetheless, you might want to give this one a trial rental before plunking down your eighty bucks for it.

PLUG IN

The Latest in Video Game News

SATURN'S RESIDENTS GET EVIL

There's good news for Sega Saturn owners: *Resident Evil* is making the leap from Sony to Sega in November. To date, Capcom has shipped more than 2.5 million copies of *Resident Evil* and is finally finished with the enhanced Saturn version. Priced to sell at $49.99, the Saturn version contains a new monster, a new weapon and an Arena Battle/Survival Mode where players must use their skill to battle a continuous onslaught of zombies and monsters.

HANG WITH ORIGINAL 'TREK' CAST

Interplay's *Star Trek: Secret of Vulcan Fury* is coming soon to a PC CD-ROM near you. The interactive game hopes to capture the look, feel and personality of the original "Star Trek" TV series through the use of all-new motion captured animation. Featuring the voices and likenesses of the original cast, *Vulcan Fury* is broken down into six all-new episodes which revolve around the ancient secret in the history of the Vulcan and Romulan races. (Y'know, the Romulans are really an offshoot of the Vulcans.) It's scheduled to ship in November for $49.99.

X-MEN TAKE IT TO THE STREET

X-Men vs. Street Fighter has been announced for the Sony PlayStation. Based on its arcade namesake, this title will feature totally unique backgrounds and hopes to level off fighting imbalances. Capcom's hoping for a Christmas release, but the company just started the porting over process, so we'll have to wait and see.

DYNAMIC DUO SWINGS TO CONSOLES

Acclaim is working on *Batman and Robin*, the video-game adaptation of this summer's blockbuster. It features a behind-the-character, three-quarter 3-D perspective where Batman, Robin or Batgirl roam (and fight their way) through 26 different areas of Gotham City. Keeping with tradition, Acclaim promises plenty of thugs and bosses.

THE TOY CHEST BY SCOTT BEATTY

Toy Biz Has Got Marvel Covered

It took a while, but we finally got pics of **Marvel Comics' Famous Covers**. This brand-new collector's assortment from Toy Biz borrows the "feel" of classic Mego World's Greatest Super-Heroes figures of the 1970s and updates 'em for the '90s with the Biz's dynamic sculpting and articulation! The first assortment, set to hit stores in late October, includes (seen below, from left) **Storm**, **Wolverine**, **Spider-Man** (with Peter Parker's mug beneath his mask!) and the **Green Goblin** (arriving with his deadly Goblin Glider and li'l pumpkin bomb) in wonderful 24-point articulated figures with real cloth costumes. Each ships in a keen gatefold box recreating a classic Marvel Comics appearance, with releases numbering just 25,000 pieces per figure and a $19.99 price tag for each.

Spidey's sweet old **Aunt May** will be the line's first exclusive, available only through a Famous Covers mail-in offer. Meanwhile, the gang at Toy Biz is working on future assortments, which it says will include **Dr. Doom**, with **Captain America**, **Daredevil** (classic red, yellow and black costume), and X-characters **Bishop** and **Gambit** slated as possible contenders.

AVENGERS VS. X-MEN

This September, Marvel's top two superteams will be vying for collectors' toy dollars with several new X-Men assortments debuting from Toy Biz, in addition to the company's premiere Avengers assortment. On the mutant front, look for **X-Men: Onslaught**, featuring the big bad destroyer Onslaught himself leading off an assortment that includes Wolverine Unleashed (Logan inna bandana) with **Franklin Richards**, Jean Grey with Juggernaut in the Ruby of Cyttorak, and Apocalypse Rising with Ozymandias.

Perhaps the most eagerly anticipated assortment is the Biz's new **Classic X-Team Gift Pack**, a nifty boxed set featuring all five original X-Men, newly sculpted and ready for action in their original togs. Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Iceman, Beast and Angel arrive in a swell gatefold box recreating Jack Kirby's classic *X-Men* #1 cover.

Jumping ahead a few light years, X-fans can pick up **X-Men: Star Riders**, X-Men with vehicles that link up to form one mammoth battle cruiser. Included in the assortment are all-new versions of Wolverine, Cyclops, Jean Grey, Beast and **Professor Xavier** (Hey, ain't he in the clink for alla that "Onslaught" crap?), each with their own Star Riders vehicles.

And finally, the mighty **Avengers** get their very own line with an assortment including **Scarlet Witch**, The Mighty Thor, **Loki** and "Heroes Reborn" **Iron Man** (styled after Jim Lee's recent revisionary work on ol' Shellhead). The recent Spider-Man: Electro Spark **Captain America** fits into the line quite nicely (being the big boy that he is). And if Marvel's "Heroes Return" *Avengers* comic uniting writer Kurt Busiek with former team penciler George Pérez hits the ground running, we just may see more Marvel heroes in the future.

Avengers (from left): Scarlet Witch, Loki, Thor and "Heroes Reborn" Iron Man

The Classic X-Men (from left): Cyclops, Beast, Angel, Iceman and Marvel Girl

X-Men: Star Riders with Wolverine, Jean Grey, Prof. X, Cyclops and Beast

X-Men: Onslaught (from left): Onslaught (w/ Ultimate Power Armor), Wolverine Unleashed (w/ Franklin Richards), Jean Grey (w/ Psychic Claw) and Apocalypse Rising (w/ Ozymandias)

Universal Monsters (from left): Mummy, Frankenstein and Wolf Man

MONSTER MASH

Hasbro New Ventures and the U.S. Postal Service are joining together to bring Universal's classic monsters back to life. This fall, monster merchandise collectors will see the release of U.S. commemorative stamps devoted to Universal's **Frankenstein**, **Wolf Man**, the **Mummy**, Dracula and the Phantom of the Opera. In addition, Hasbro New Ventures is serving up a nifty three-pack featuring Frankenstein, Wolf Man and the Mummy with actual movie likenesses. Look for these 12-inch figures as a J.C. Penney's fall catalog-exclusive. And, if the line is successful, keep your eyes peeled for other classic monsters to join the lineup.

TOY BIZ BUZZ

Lotsa news buzz this month from the mighty makers of Marvel toys:

First up, Toy Biz will release **Kull the Conqueror** action figures this August to coincide with the release of the big-screen debut of Robert E. Howard's classic pulp hero....Also on the horizon are **Blade** action figures, based on the feature film franchise launch of Marvel's vampire-hunting...uh...vampire, starring Wesley Snipes (as Blade). Look for figures to begin hitting store shelves after Christmas 1997....Capcom and Toy Biz are joining forces for two highly anticipated assortments based on the video game company's ***Street Fighter vs. X-Men*** and ***Resident Evil***....And finally, there will be three, count 'em, three assortments devoted to **Silver Surfer** this September: a line of highly detailed 10-inch figures, a collector's line based on Marvel's *Silver Surfer* comic, plus a line devoted entirely on the forthcoming FOX Kids "Silver Surfer" animated series. Cosmic Marvel characters like **Magus**, **Drax the Destroyer** and an all-new **Thanos** just might make it into one or more of the lineups.

TOTAL JUSTICE... NO MORE

Kenner recently announced that its **Batman: Total Justice** line would be discontinued following the release of its Wave Three figures, currently shipping. In addition, those figures, which include first-ever renditions of the **Huntress**, **Black Lightning**, **Green Arrow** (Connor Hawke) and **Parallax**, will have limited availability. Die-hard DC collectors should snap 'em up quick before they're gone forever. In Total Justice's wake, however, Kenner is making room for an all-new Batman segment which the company assures will make fans of DC heroes *very* happy. We'll bring you all the info as soon as Kenner releases the news.

BATMAN "REFRESHED"

Press releases for the revamped **"Batman"** animated series report that Kenner will support the all-new episodes (airing weekdays this fall as "The Adventures of Batman & Robin" and weekends alongside the Man of Steel as "The New Batman/Superman Adventures") with a "refreshed product line." For those Bat-collectors keeping score, the all-new episodes will feature Batman in a retro look (minus the oval, with a more Golden Age Bat-symbol), an all-new **Robin** to replace Dick Grayson (now **Nightwing**! Whoo-hoo!), in addition to regular appearances by a crime-fightin' gal going by the name o'

WISH LIST

THE 10 FIGURES THAT WIZARD WANTS TO SEE MADE

Photo courtesy of Lucasfilm

1) Darth Vader w/ Removable Helmet (Star Wars)
We'd trade a gazillion Endor Hans for just one Darth with Removable Helmet. Give him a red lightsaber and removable helmet to reveal the scarred kisser of Anakin Skywalker and we can all cry along with Luke, baby!

2) Blink (X-Men)
Yeah, the "Age of Apocalypse" X-gal! And yeah, she'd have nifty static cling "teleport" portals and removable energy jewelers! What more do you need to know, Toy Biz?!?

3) "New" X-Men Boxed Set (X-Men)
A boxed set of international X-Men from *Giant Size X-Men #1*, including Banshee, Thunderbird, Storm, Colossus, Nightcrawler and Sunfire would rock the house!

4) Superman: New Costume (Superman: Man of Steel)
Yeah, it's shrouded in controversy, but either way you slice it, it'd be a cool figure. Toss in a blue-sparking chest like Electro-Spark Spidey and we'd buy two!

5) Amalgam (DC/Marvel Heroes)
Though another *Marvel versus DC* isn't on the immediate horizon, fans are still achin' to see action figures based on DC/Marvel Amalgams like Super Soldier, Dark Claw, Dr. Strangefate and Iron Lantern.

6) X-Man (X-Men)
Another "AoA" poster child, this alternate-future Nate Grey would charm the socks off collectors with snap-on TK blasts and light-up eye! Heck, why not throw in Nate's gal pal Threnody and make it a two-pack!

7) Sunfire: Age of Apocalypse (X-Men)
Yeah, we know we asked for him up in the #3 slot, but we're pushin' our luck and askin' for the spiffy "AoA" costumed Sunny as well, with snap-on flame "hand" and flame-shield, kinda like the oversized snap ons from Iceman II.

8) Hulk (The Incredible Hulk)
Sure, there's been a bunch of Toy Biz Hulk figures, but what we want is a GOOD Hulk figure that fits in with the rest of the Marvel figures, but is still all big and chunky like The Thing II. Oh, and he should come with a lil' poseable scrawny Banner figure that DOESN'T fit inside.

9) Nightwing (Total Justice)
Dick Grayson would come with Batarangs, truncheon sticks and a retractable jump-line to make Batman proud — and to make up for that godawful "Batman and Robin" flick. "Kill the heroes"?!? Yup, it did for us.

10) Gen[13] (WildStorm)
Okay, kiddies — last time: Freefall with punker outfit change, Fourchild w/ breakaway student clothes, Burnout w/ light-up hands and light-up, snap-on flame bolts, Rainmaker w/ light-up eyes and snap-on energy bolts and Grunge w/ interchangeable "absorbed" arms. Nuff said.

Hey! Keep sending them Top 10 lists! You've already made a difference! Drop us a note with your "dream figures" at:

Top 10 Wishes
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920

Or e-mail us at:
WizardTGTC@aol.com

Figrin D'an

Batgirl. Hmm...we smell action figures.

STAR WARS 12-INCH UPDATE

Hey, kiddies—check out these nifty pics of Hasbro New Ventures' **Figrin D'an and the Modal Nodes**, six separate 12-inch Mos Eisley Cantina Band Member releases from Wal-Mart. Look for Figrin D'an (the Huey Lewis of the group) and his cronies Doikk N'ats, Ickabel, Nalan, Tech and Tedn to hit toy shelves this September. The good news: None will be short-packed. The bad news: There won't be any alien Greedo chick groupies. Damn.

WITCHBLADE TOYS!

It's official! **Top Cow Comics** and **Moore Action Collectibles** recently inked a deal for M.A.C. to produce the first toys based on Top Cow's white-hot ***Witchblade***. Set for release in early 1998 are four action figure likenesses of Sara Pezzini (Witchblade), Ian Nottingham, Medieval Witchblade and either Anne Bonny (from Top Cow's *Tales of the Witchblade*) or Witchblade foil Kenneth Irons. Each figure will have an approximate $9.95 retail. At press time, fellow Top Cow hit ***The Darkness*** was still in negotiations for possible M.A.C. action-figure treatment.

LADY DEMON MAKES THE CUT

In other M.A.C. news, company president Clayburn Moore recently confirmed that Chaos! Comics' **Chastity** would be replaced by **Lady Demon** (sort of an amalgam of Lady Death and Purgatori) in the first Chaos! action-figure assortment, which would also include Evil Ernie, Lady Death and Purgatori. Fans of the lady vampire need not worry, however, since Chastity is slated for the second assortment of M.A.C.'s Chaos! figures.

CREED ACTION

Lightning Entertainment, Inc.'s action-figure division **Skybolt Toyz** has announced it will be producing the first collectible figures based on Trent Kaniuga's popular ***Creed*** comic series. Set to hit comic store shelves this October, Skybolt's "Action Posed" Creed figures stand five inches tall, with highly detailed paint decos and design guides by Kaniuga himself, but sadly, no articulation. Instead, the Creed toys will sport dynamic poses, putting them more in the realm of PVC figures than true "action" figures. The first batch of Creed figures will include two separate versions of **Mark Farley** (Creed), his nemesis **Disorder** and dream world warrior **Mai-Ling**, each limited to just 9,999 pieces, with a suggested retail of $7.95 per figure. W

ToyFare *Editor Scott Beatty has an "action pose" every morning, just after a breakfast that's high in fiber.*

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

GRAND PRIZE

All of the following figures were made from plain old, ordinary figures and household materials. The talented Grand Prize Winner rides away with three statues from Comic Book Champions: Captain America, Amazing Fantasy Spider-Man and the Incredible Hulk! The Runner-Up scores two of the above statues, while everyone else gets one of 'em! Spectacular work, people!

COMIC BOOK CHAMPIONS™

A ton o' thanks to the folks at Comic Book Champions for the awesome prizes!

LADY RAWHIDE
Steven Silvia of Saunderstown, R.I.
Constructed out of a Toy Biz (TB) White Queen torso and legs, TB Black Cat hair, hands and upper-left thigh, TB Phoenix arms and a TB Psylocke head, this Lady Rawhide shines in its glory!

RUNNER-UP

DR. STRANGEFATE
Shawn Williams of St. Cloud, Minn.
To make this Dr. Strangefate a true amalgam, Shawn used a Toy Biz Dr. Strange body, wood filler for the helmet, a Wet-Works (McFarlane Toys) Assassin One's arrow for the staff and some Testor model paint to touch up the costume.

JACK O' LANTERN
Dan Buczynski of Pittsburgh, Pa.
It's ironic this Jack O' Lantern figure is a repainted Toy Biz Spider-Man 2099 figure ('Cause Jack O' Lantern's arch-nemesis is Spidey...get it?).

"EVIL DEAD" ASH
Doug Miller of Silverdale, Wash.
Bringing Bruce Campbell's character from the "Evil Dead" trilogy to life from a Toy Biz Tony Stark and some Super Sculpey, Doug really did fulfill Ash's famous line, "Give me some sugar, baby." This figure is sweet.

"STAR WARS" DROIDS
Jim Heston of Hewitt, Texas
Even using the Force won't tell us how Jim made these "Star Wars" droids that include (from left) an IT-O Interrogator, a Treadwell, a C2-RO and an S.E. Probe. Help us, Obi-Wan...

MIRACLEMAN
K. R. Keefauver of Mechanicsburg, Pa.
We don't know what a U.S. Service Memorial Figure is, but when K.R. repainted one of 'em, he did justice to Alan Moore's classic Miracleman.

HEY!

If you're interested in entering the homemade figure contest, send well-lit, clear, color photographs (No Polaroids, and put 'em in a cool or funny pose!), along with your name, address, description of how you created your figure, and your full phone number (including area code) to:

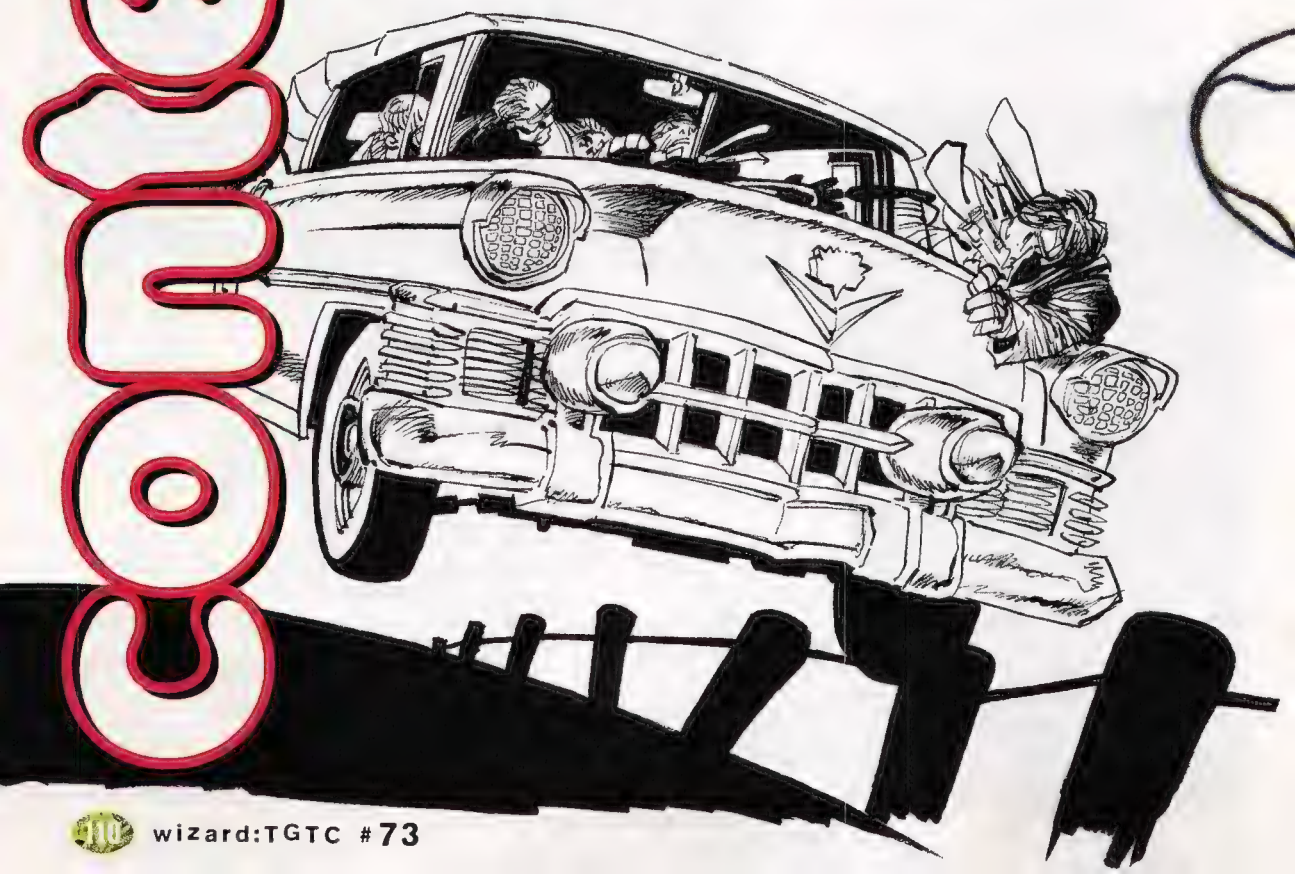
HOMEMADE HEROES
c/o Wizard Press
PO Box 118
Congers, NY 10920-0118

Dark Horse Comics & Bowen Designs Present:

The SIN CITY "Dead On Arrival" Contest!

CONTEST!

SIN CITY—"A NICE PLACE TO DIE, BUT YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO LIVE THERE..." HMM. NOT EXACTLY THE PLACE FOR A QUIET, PEACEFUL VACATION, IS IT? WELL, GUESS WHAT? YOU *WENT* THERE FOR VACATION, AND CONSEQUENTLY, THERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS AND SOME BAD NEWS!



The Bad News: You were expecting a nice little vacation, but wound up dead instead.

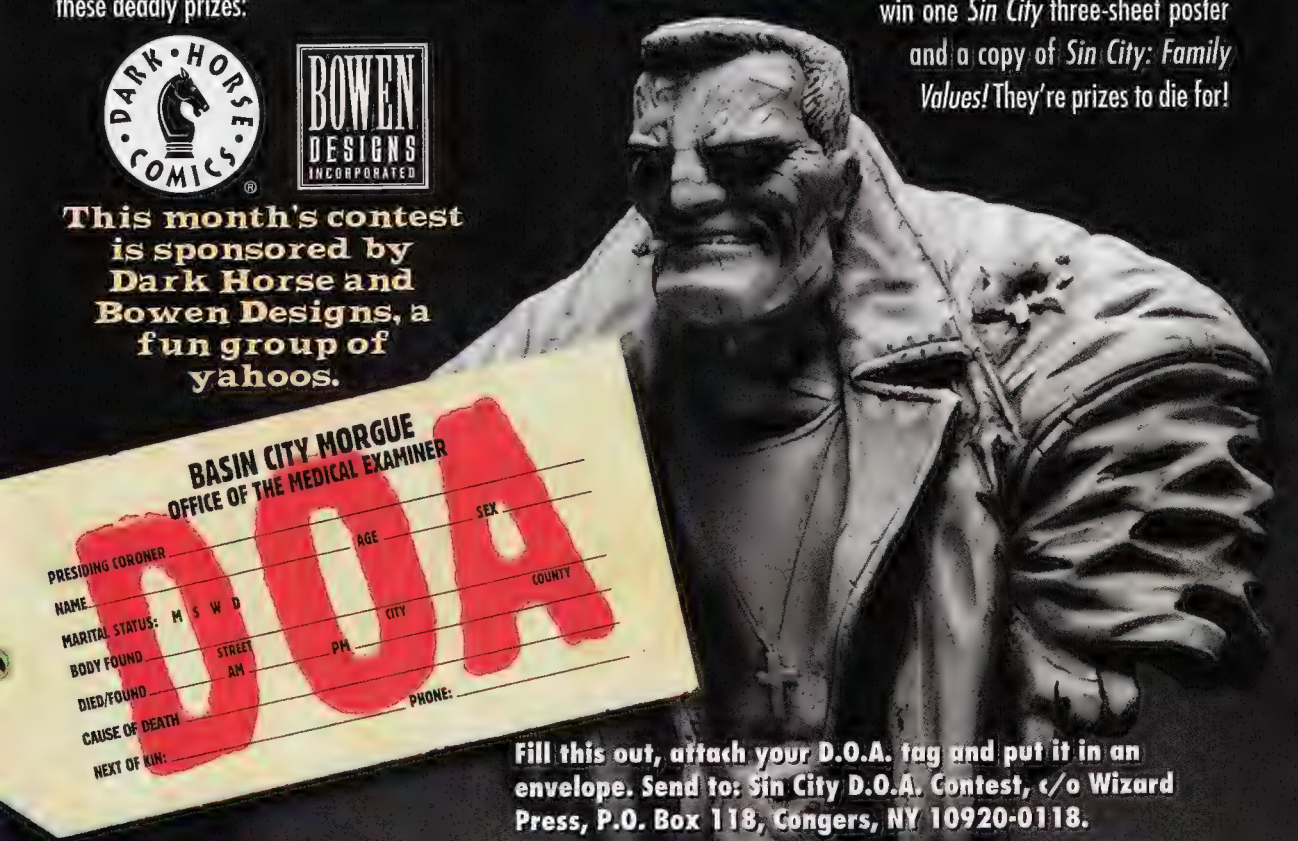
The Good News: You could walk away with some exciting prizes!

What To Do: Sin City's medical examiner is a busy, busy man. So give him a hand by filling out your very own D.O.A. (dead on arrival) tag (provided below)! The most original cause of death could win you these deadly prizes:

This month's contest is sponsored by Dark Horse and Bowen Designs, a fun group of yahoos.

Grand Prize (1): One lucky *victim* will win a prototype bust of Sin City's very own Marv! This bust will be hand-painted and signed by sculptor Randy Bowen and additionally signed by *Sin City* creator Frank Miller! Plus, you'll also receive a *Sin City* three-sheet poster (Good for any wall!) and a copy of *Sin City: Family Values*. It's Sin City or bust!

Second Prize (10): Ten second prize victims will win one *Sin City* three-sheet poster and a copy of *Sin City: Family Values!* They're prizes to die for!



Fill this out, attach your D.O.A. tag and put it in an envelope. Send to: Sin City D.O.A. Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is September 30, 1997.

Sinful Legalese

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Dark Horse, their immediate families and whoever brought Elektra back to life. Oooo...Frank Miller must think you're a Mr. Poopy-Pants. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card, and attach the form or card to your entry. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Sin City D.O.A. Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. Please, no body parts delivered through the mail. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Man, we can't get enough of Miller drawing naked chicks with venetian blind shadows on their bodies. Mmm-mmm! Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. No horses were harmed during the creation of this contest. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on originality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Winning entries will be selected on or about October 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after October 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Sin City D.O.A. Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Sin City D.O.A. Entry Form

DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30, 1997!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Cause of death _____

a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

Dazed and Confused

Ed Brubaker puts a twist on realistic tales in his new comic 'Detour'

On the road of life, cartoonist Ed Brubaker has taken a *Detour*. Best known for his semi-autobiographical comics series *Lowlife* and various writing credits from Vertigo, Brubaker is hoping to give his work a new sense of maturity and sophistication with his latest efforts, the one-shot *At The Seams* and the upcoming regular series *Detour*. In fact, Brubaker might just be creating reality-based comics that, as strange as it might sound, could possibly rival the work of contemporary short-fiction writers.

"The stories are realism-based, but there are elements of non-reality in them," Brubaker explains. "The first issue of *Detour* is a story about a guy who lives in a city that is basically San Francisco, but in a world where there are earthquakes every day." Fans of Brubaker's earlier comics will recognize this move for what it is—a definite change of direction.

Brubaker was moved to add new elements to his comic work when he began to feel the limitations of autobiographical comics. With a series named *Lowlife*, people made some assumptions about Brubaker and his work that he's currently trying to disprove. "I felt kind of trapped by the name *Lowlife* and the whole slacker feel. Anytime anyone saw my comic they immediately thought it was going to be about guys hanging out and whining about how pathetic their lives are and how no one loves them. You can only put up with that for so long."

In his new books, Brubaker plans to use elements of fantasy as a way to explore various themes in his stories. The difficult thing is keeping the non-realistic details in the background. "These are all just little elements. If you're reading the story and weren't paying too close attention, you wouldn't even notice it wasn't taking place in a normal world. The symbolism of the story is sort of a fear of the future and the way things seem to be going. I'm trying to use physical things as metaphors for the way people get detached or the way the outside world keeps creeping in and in."

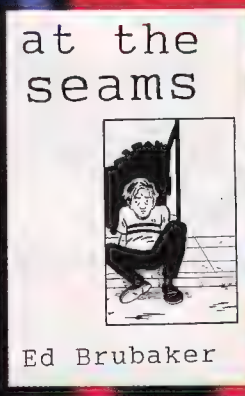
While this may sound a bit heavy and depressing, Brubaker plans to lighten up each issue of *Detour* with a series of back-up stories that relate personal memoirs about growing up obsessed with comics. "They're actually not as bad as that may sound!" Brubaker laughs. "They're going to be bittersweet memoirs about life in the '70s that all involve comics somehow. One of my earliest memories was my dad plopping down a big stack of comics he'd gotten from some friends at the office. These stories will probably be the most autobiographical things I've ever done."

Brubaker is well aware that stories about comic books might alienate some readers who didn't grow up immersed in four-color superheroes. "I think the elements of the comic-collector aspect of it are downplayed enough where they boil down to just memories about being a kid and the innocence of the time period compared to the way the world is now. I'm mainly doing them to please that side of myself that did grow up reading a bunch of Marvel and DC comics. This is who I am as well. I'm a little turned off by how cynical and dismissive most alternative cartoonists are about the stuff they actually grew up reading."

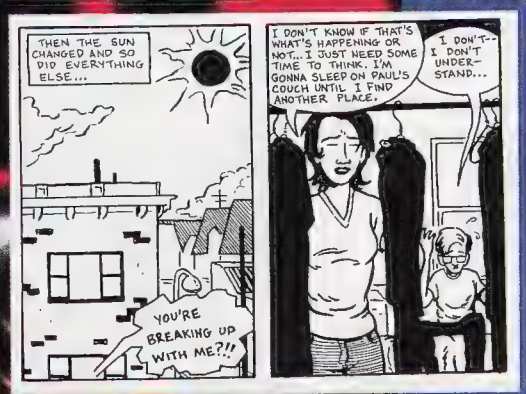
Perhaps Brubaker's intimate knowledge of comics has tipped him off to the enormous potential of the medium. "In comics you can pretty much do whatever you want. It's free!

Christopher, the protagonist from Brubaker's *Detour*, keeps a watchful eye out for earthquakes.

by tom palmer jr.



Left: Reality bites in *At the Seams*. Below: Ed Brubaker mixes realism and fantasy to set a surreal tone.



if I want to [create] an earthquake every day, I don't have to actually go out and videotape it or pay millions of dollars to simulate it. I can just draw some wreckage on the page."

Doing this convincingly has forced Brubaker to focus more on his art. He claims the biggest improvement came when he switched inking tools. "Using a brush has made my art get a lot better. I tried inking with a brush when I was a teenager and gave up when I realized it was too hard to master. I tried picking it up again two years ago and I wish I never quit. I'm just getting to the point where I can look at a page I just finished and go, 'This looks pretty good.'"

Using a brush has also forced Brubaker to re-evaluate other aspects of his art. "Once I started inking things with a brush I realized how much stuff I didn't know how to draw. I don't know why it never occurred to me before to go out and actually shoot photos for reference and go out and draw stuff from life, or look through magazines and look at people's faces and try to draw different kinds of people. I guess I was just incredibly lazy. I've been forcing myself to work a little harder and get better."

Surprisingly, Brubaker has found that all his research doesn't take that much effort. "I think one of the reasons I put it off for so long was because I thought it would take so much extra time, but it really doesn't. I have to draw a lot of pigeons in the first *Detour*, and it wasn't that big of a hassle to get a camera and go to this park near my house and take a roll of film with pigeons."

Brubaker also plans to improve his art through some good old-fashioned discipline. "I'm pushing myself to draw five days a week for at least four hours a day. It doesn't sound like very much, but on a day when I feel like crap, if I force myself to draw I'll end up getting a lot done on a day where I would have just watched TV or read a book and then felt bad the next day because I didn't do any work."

It's a good thing he's committed to drawing so much, because Brubaker has a lot planned for his new series, including a serialized graphic novel. "Hopefully the comics industry won't go bottom-up in the next three years! My commitment with the comic is to get it out three times a year. I figure that even at my laziest I should be able to get a comic out that often." W

Before becoming a freelance writer, Tom Palmer Jr. lived among a family of wild pigeons. Insert your own bird poop joke here.

F.Y.I.

At the Seams is on stands now from Alternative Press. If you can't find a copy, drop them a line at 611 NW 34th Drive, Gainesville, FL 32607 (sample issues are $2.95 plus $1 for shipping). You can also give them a call at (352) 373-6336 or check out their website at **www.indyworld.com**. A collection of *Lowlife*, titled *A Complete Lowlife*, is due out from Black Eye Productions. Write them at 1030 St. Alexandre Suite 5, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Z 1P3 or catch them on the Web at **www.blackeye.com**.

Ed Brubaker's Picks

"Of course, I read stuff like *Eightball*, *Acme Novelty Library* and everything Jim Woodring does. I also like *Pickle*, *Smell of Steve*, *Berlin*, *The Sands*, *Nowhere*, *Palooka-Ville*, *Black Hole*, *Dirty Plotte*, *Spectacles*, *Yikes* and whatever Joe Sacco is working on."

Recommended Reading

No Love Lost Ariel Bordeaux got her start in mini-comics, and *No Love Lost* is her first full-length work in the world of full-size comics. This little story is quite an impressive effort. Inside the pages of this book you'll meet Emma and Jed, a couple stuck in a relationship that is going absolutely nowhere. The interesting thing about the story isn't where their relationship ends up, but in the way that Bordeaux conveys their tale. She has a knack for conversational dialogue and at times her comics can be brutally honest. Don't miss out on this intriguing comic from a promising newcomer. For more information, write to Drawn & Quarterly Publications, P.O. Box 48056, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2V 4S8 or go to **www.egcite.com/quarterly** and check out the company's new website.

Nowhere This series has got to be the best-looking comic on the stands. Debbie Drechsler illustrates her comic entirely in two colors (green and sepia), giving the series a unique and very unsettling feeling. The story deals with the life of Lily, a young girl who feels lost and isolated after moving to a new town, so Drechsler's distinctive art is all the more appropriate. *Nowhere* is also published by Drawn & Quarterly, so check out the ordering information above.

THE SKINNY

Comic book REVIEWS from the *Wizard* Editors

THE SCORING

6 THE BEST | 5 EXCELLENT | 4 GOOD | 3 SO-SO | 2 UGH | 1 CRAPOLA

WOLVERINE

...but what he does is nothing new

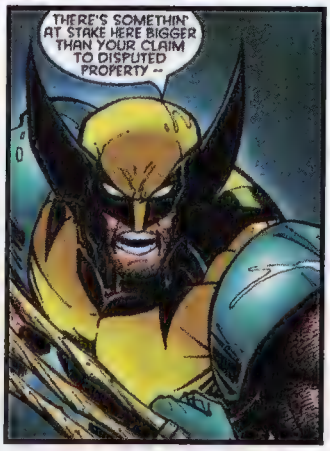
Issues Reviewed: #108-#114
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: Marvel Comics
Creative Team: Larry Hama, Anthony Winn, Dan Green, Leinil Francis Yu and Edgar Tadeo
Price/Frequency: $1.99/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Plagued by contradictory memory implants, the Canadian mutant Logan (a.k.a. Wolverine of the X-Men) searches for the answers to his past and helps innocents along the way.

The Good: The new penciler on this book, Leinil Francis Yu, is very good and fits Wolverine's adventures that have ninjas and superhuman Japanese; the art sports manga elements, but avoids the cartoonier elements of that style. Another aspect of the artwork being so good is that Wolverine is drawn proportionately correct for someone of his short height. (His 5-foot-3 frame is something that's rarely paid attention to.)

With Yu's arrival, the current team has decided to show Logan more in his complete costume, instead of with that silly bandanna on his head or out of costume altogether. And it's about time, since Wolverine has one of the best costumes out there.

This character also has a lot of history to draw from, with connections to the X-Men titles and from Wolverine's own personal history. Add that to the depth of this character's personality and you have a solid base for this title to run with...



The Bad: ...Except the base concept of this book is all we get. Yes, we *know* Wolverine has a struggle with his inner animal instincts. Yes, we *know* he has enemies in the ninja organization known as The Hand. Yes, we *know* he doesn't get along with Lady Deathstrike (and a bear once in a while). These tired ninja-style adventures have been covered *ad nauseam* since the original *Wolverine* mini-series 15 years ago, and there's nothing new being done with them. Why not toss a little variety Logan's way in the form of Absorbing Man or Carnage?

Speaking of tired, the bone claws schtick has gotta go. A big part of Wolverine's edge was the fact that his adamantium claws were razor-sharp and he could kill anyone at any time. The bone claws were interesting at first, but after four years they've become dopey. The wait for the adamantium claws' impending return is getting (yawn) boring.

The book also has a few basic flaws, like having a different supporting cast each storyline totaling in numbers of two to three. This takes focus off of Wolverine; if we wanted a team book with Logan, we'd pick up the X-Men books.

The Buzz: The writing will soon be taken over by Steven T. Seagle (*Alpha Flight*, *Sandman Mystery Theatre*), who wants to bring back the adamantium. Hopefully, Marvel will let it happen.

The Skinny: This book is currently going through the motions of a Wolverine comic. All the characters and storyline are there, but there is nothing different being done with it.

Finally! Wolvie's back in costume (and with great art, to boot). Now if only those adamantium claws would return...

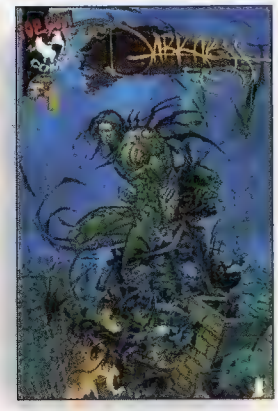
Wolverine fighting ninjas. How original.

The Verdict: 2 UGH

THE DARKNESS

Dark means light

Issues Reviewed: #1-#5
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: Image/Top Cow
Creative Team: Garth Ennis, Marc Silvestri and Batt
Price/Frequency: $2.50/Monthly



What You Need to Know: Mafia hitman Jackie Estacado recently discovered his bloodline holds the powers of the Darkness, which he has recently acquired. Now he has unlimited and violent powers, but cannot have sex in fear of dying when he passes his powers to his child.

The Good: This book is one of the most visually appealing comics on the market. The dark art is extremely appropriate for this title, and the coloring effects are extraordinary, enhancing character designs and mood. The Angelus warriors, for instance, in armored form, are the perfect example of color-aided design (and that's not to mention the fact they're cool to begin with).

And the stories are fun and energetic. Sure, Jackie's a cold-hearted killer but after the uproarious situations he's put in, you can't help but like him. It's a riot to see that when he learns it's too dangerous to have sex, he doesn't even want to go on living. It's a little goofy, yes, but when played against the over-the-top violence, it ends up being entertaining.

Mix this dark humor into the background history that intertwines the power of the Darkness to Top Cow's other heavy-hitting title *Witchblade* and you have a sense of a bigger picture.

The Bad: There's not much else to the book besides its premise. So far, it's been "Jackie has the Darkness, Lord Sonatine wants to control him, and the Angelus wants him dead." That's just about it. There isn't much subtlety to anyone's plans, and, so far, the story is overly simple.

Also, there are elements to this book that aren't explained. If Jackie is the inheritor of the Darkness, then why does Sontaine have Darkness powers as well? We thought it was hereditary. Also, the Darkness lets Jackie create anything he can understand (meaning he could create a woman if he knew exactly how a living human works, but he doesn't and so he can't), so how can he create little imps? He certainly doesn't understand how their life functions work, does he?

Lastly, beyond the spirit of fun, the heavy violence and sexy poses that women strike can be a bit gratuitous at times.

The Buzz: Garth Ennis is taking a hiatus, and the *Witchblade* team of Christina Z. and David Wohl will take over the writing until he returns. Expect a crossover storyline between *Darkness* and *Witchblade* in the fall.

The Skinny: A fun book with a simple plot, *The Darkness* is an entertaining one-trick-pony. The true test of the book's strength will be where the storyline goes after it's finished introducing the characters and the Darkness' background.

Goofy cliffhangers and plot elements like this make The Darkness a fun read.

This book has an awesome marriage of art and color.

The Verdict: 4 GOOD

STARMAN

This book needs to come back to Earth

Issues Reviewed: #41-#48
Genre: Superhero action/adventure
Publisher: DC Comics
Creative Team: James Robinson, Tony Harris and Wade Von Grawbadger
Price/Frequency: $2.25/Monthly

What You Need to Know: Son of the Golden Age Starman, Jack Knight has reluctantly taken on the role of Opal City's protector, as the city's newest Starman. Armed with a cosmic rod that gives him flight and emits energy blasts, Jack continues the good fight his father started decades ago.

The Good: *Starman* is filled with such rich characterization that everyone comes across as real. Jack Knight himself is an easy character to get into, and doesn't carry too much baggage. And the villains in this series have such a sense of humanity. At one point, Copperhead carries on a realistic-sounding conversation with a shop owner, as he tries to buy an antique transistor radio for his collection. (Issues #27 and #29 accent this quality the best.)

There's a definite mood to this book: dark and occult-like. The art plays a big role in establishing that atmosphere with a unique style, setting *Starman* apart from the rest of DC's titles.

There's a lot of interesting history in this book, centering on the lineage and the legacy that surrounds the "Starman" name and the many people who've held it over the years.

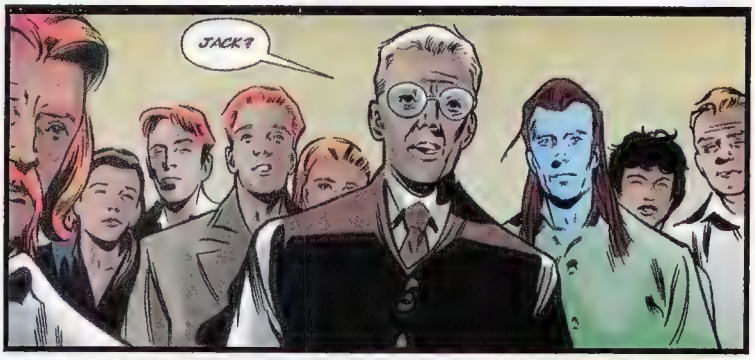
The Bad: ...Head...hurt...! With less-than-zero story recaps, little basic character explanations (Uh, just what can Starman do?) and tons of unexplained supporting characters (the O'Dare family, specifically), *Starman* is a very confusing book. The "Demon Quest" three-parter (#24-#26) is extremely incoherent for a new reader who might've heard about the "buzz" on the book. (Thankfully, *Starman* recently plugged in a "What's Happened Before" box—but why's it in the letters page where readers have to read the issue first to get to it?)

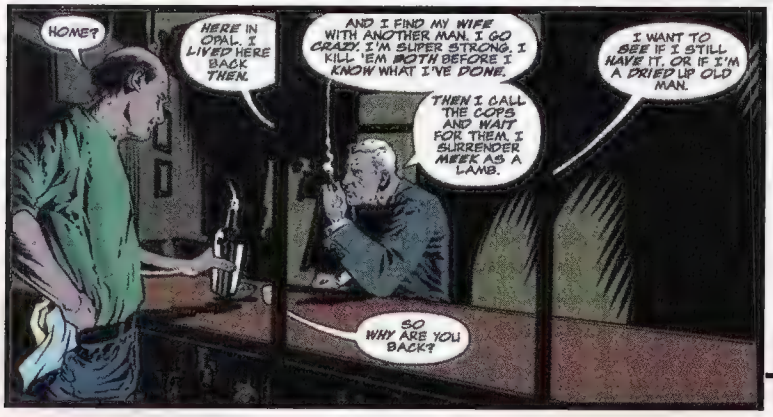
While issue #29—which was an intentional "jump-on" issue for new readers—succeeded in bringing new readers up to date, it did so through *five full pages* of prose! It's certainly an intimidating way to bring in new readers who might not want to plod through it; instead, why not use those pages to recap in the story itself? (On the flipside, though, #29's story was excellent, so we hope new readers hung in there to enjoy it as much as we did.)

Adding to the confusion was the most recent storyline "Infernal Devices" (#30-#33). Besides having a mysterious pirate kick off the storyline and disappear in part three without resolving his problem, this four-parter ended on a *cliffhanger*, necessitating an annoyingly unannounced fifth part.

The Buzz: James Robinson's quickly gaining new readers as he takes on high-profile books like *Generation X* and *Cable*. Those fans may soon be moving over to *Starman* to see more of his work.

The Skinny: There are so many rich characters, heavy history and interesting concepts in *Starman*, but unfortunately they're all lost in a sea of confusion.





Starman suffers from too many supporting characters with little information given about them.

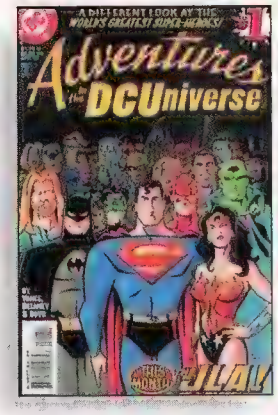
The characterization is fantastic—particularly with villians such as Bobo Benetti.

The Verdict: 3 SO-SO

ADVENTURES IN THE DC UNIVERSE

Kid-tested, 'Wizard' approved

Issues Reviewed: #1-#5
Genre: Superhero action/adventure for kids
Publisher: DC Comics
Creative Team: Steve Vance, John Delaney and Ron Boyd
Price/Frequency: $1.75/Monthly



What You Need to Know: Set outside regular DC continuity, all the adventures in this title exist as if they were part of the same universe that the "animated-style" books like *Batman & Robin Adventures* and *Superman Adventures* inhabit.

The Good: Not only is this book easy to get sucked into, it'll grab younger readers in particular, which is its intended goal. You're given everything you need to know about these characters within each self-contained issue; all the origins are recapped quickly and cleanly, without bogging you down. And with a lot of supporting characters (like Flash's girlfriend Linda Park in issue #2 or Wonder Woman's friend Mike Schorr in issue #3), *Adventures in the DCU* might as well be part of DC continuity. It's got all the main and side characters, just with a bit of the edge taken off. Because of this, *Adventures* is a great stepping-stone to the DC Universe for both new and young readers.

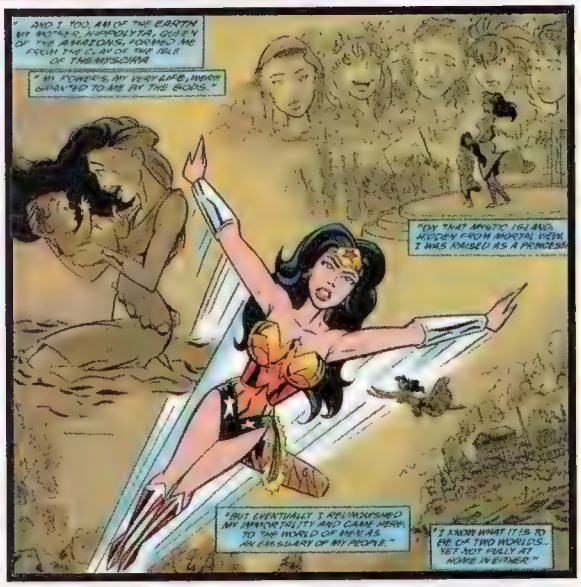
Unlike other kid-oriented books on the market today, *Adventures* actually takes the time to introduce secondary characters that are relevant to the story and main characters. These stories are not contrived, but instead are neat little tales that get to the essence of what these superheroes are all about. Not only that, but you get a short back-up story each issue.

Plus, it's really neat seeing your favorite DC characters in a cartoony format, *and* a different main character is used each month allowing a breath of fresh air.

The book is excellent with recapping origins.

The plot twists used are simple, yet fun.

The Verdict: 4 GOOD



The Bad: The title's main problem, however, is that some of the stories don't give enough closure. While the good guys win in issue #1, you never learn who the mysterious villain is (four issues later, you still don't). And in issue #4, Green Lantern's enemies constantly mention Darkseid, but this "Darkseid" fella is never shown, leaving newcomers wondering what's so bad about him.

While the rotating cast does keep things moving, it also makes the book inconsistent. From month to month, readers really have nothing to grab onto except for the general style of the series.

Oh, and if this book is really aimed for kids, why the $1.75 cover price? DC should take a cue from Marvel's 99 cents line, and go with a more allowance-happy price for kids.

The Buzz: There really isn't much buzz with this series. But wouldn't it be cool to see a real cartoon with these heroes? (You listening, Warner Bros.?)

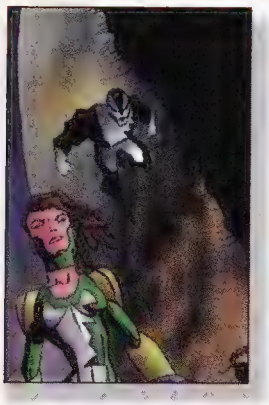
The Skinny: With simple, yet entertaining stories, *Adventures in the DC Universe* is a fun and innocent read that sets out to introduce readers young and old to the DC Universe, and it succeeds wonderfully. W

PICKS

BEHOLD!

THEY'RE MAD, I TELL YOU!

THE MUST-READ COMICS SHIPPING IN AUGUST



ALPHA FLIGHT #3

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN #11

TITLES DENOTED WITH A **MR** CONTAIN MATERIAL THAT'S SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS.

ADVENTURES IN THE DC UNIVERSE #7

DC COMICS When that evil, bald-headed Dr. Sivana kidnaps Captain Marvel's alter ego Billy Batson and steals the power of Shazam, it's up to the rest of the Marvels (that'd be Mary and Cap'n Marvel Jr.) to rescue their friend. The only problem: getting through Sivana's partner in crime…Black Adam. By Steve Vance, John Delaney and Ron Boyd. **$1.75**

AKIKO #17

SIRIUS And now for something completely different. *Akiko*'s about a little Earth girl (that's Akiko) and her friends from the planet Smoo, who go on all sorts of wild and dangerous adventures in outer space. There's the lovable one-legged rogue Spuckler, his hysterically sarcastic robot Gax and the mysterious floating smiley-face called Poog. Think "Wizard of Oz" meets "Star Wars" and you've got an idea of what *Akiko*'s like. Anyway, in this issue, Akiko must invoke some special magic words to defeat the evil Queen Rellapor and save the Prince of Smoo. By Mark Crilley. **$2.50**

ALPHA FLIGHT #3

MARVEL Canada's greatest heroes (read: *only* heroes) face Chinook, the deformed, misshapen freak who was sucked into a black hole at the end of the *Alpha Flight Flashback Special*. As Alpha Flight struggles to beat its foe, so shall we struggle not to make fun of the team for letting a midget join its ranks. By Steven T. Seagle, Scott Clark and Chris Carlson. **$1.99**

AQUAMAN #37

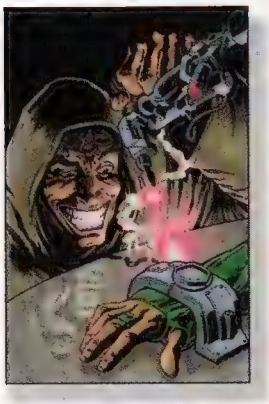
DC COMICS This story ties into DC's "Genesis" crossover, in which all the world's heroes find their powers altered or removed when a cosmic wave contracts across the galaxy. Taking advantage of this, the would-be world conqueror Darkseid sends a troop of Parademons to occupy Aquaman's home city of Poseidonis and destroy Aquaman. By Peter David, Jim Calafiore and P.L. Palmiotti. David says, "One of the Parademons becomes separated from the rest of the group, and the meat of the story is the focus on this one particular Parademon—this being who is part of this lifeform created to have no sense of independence whatsoever. No sense of soul, no sense of self. And this one particular Parademon, who doesn't even have a name, slowly starts to develop a sense of self." **$1.75**

BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN #11 (OF 13)

DC COMICS We heartily recommend you avoid attending the birthday party for mob boss Carmine "The Roman" Falcone. The killer Holiday (who just loves to shoot Falcone's friends and associates) is on the loose, making attendance at the party only slightly less risky than breaking up with Alanis Morissette. Meanwhile, Batman searches for Holiday, and wiseguy Sal "The Boss" Marone goes before a judge and squeals like Michael Jackson. By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$2.95**

BIRDS OF PREY: WOLVES

BLOODY MARY: LADY LIBERTY #2



GREEN LANTERN #91

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #2

BIRDS OF PREY: WOLVES

DC COMICS This one-shot sees the babe team-supreme of Oracle (that be the now-wheelchair-bound Batgirl) and Black Canary (she used to sleep with Green Arrow before he became a kid) face their greatest challenge: going their separate ways. By Chuck Dixon, Dick Giordano and Wayne Faucher. **$2.95**

BLOODY MARY: LADY LIBERTY #2 (OF 4)

HELIX/DC COMICS The assassin Bloody Mary and her crazed partner Major parachute into war-torn Harlem to prevent the evil (and very virile, apparently) Reverend Achilles Seagal from fathering 144,000 children. Oh yeah, and they also have to liberate New York from Seagal's grasp, something that might be hard to do since it's just Mary and Major vs. Seagal and his thousands of followers. By Garth Ennis and Carlos Ezquerra. **$2.50**

THE COPYBOOK TALES #6

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS This issue's cover parodies *Uncanny X-Men*'s "Days of Future Past" (#141-#142). Inside, however, our young hero Jamie goes on a hellish date with a psychic who probably charges him like $2 per minute just to *talk* with her and then slaps him silly before he can even ask for some booty. By J. Torres and Tim Levins. **$2.95**

DAREDEVIL #368

MARVEL The demented Omega Red shows up in Hell's Kitchen to ask directions to the MOMA from Daredevil, but surprisingly, the two end up beating the royal snot out of each other. Daredevil's ex-lover the Black Widow shows up, too, making it one of those *ménage a* somethingorothers. By Joe Kelly, Gene Colan and Bud LaRosa. Says Kelly, "Over the last couple of months, anytime we've seen Natasha [Romanova, the Black Widow], she's been kind of riding the fence: Is she the avenging Avenger, is she good or has she lost faith in the superhero dream? In this issue, we see her take things very much to the extreme. She's even gone so far as to put on the old costume again—the Black Widow [outfit] with long hair and the full black costume. By the end of this issue, she's gonna be on a most-wanted list." **$1.99**

FANTASTIC FOUR #12

MARVEL The planet-eating Galactus shows up at Earth's doorstep wearing a grin and a napkin the size of Saturn. He's hungry, and the Fantastic Four have to stop him before he stuffs his face. To do so, they might need some help from their arch-foe Dr. Doom. This ish begins a four-parter that crosses over into all the "Heroes Reborn" titles. By Jim Lee, Brandon Choi, Brett Booth and Tom McWeeney. **$2.99**

GENERATION X #31

MARVEL The Generation X kids find themselves trapped by the robotic, mutant-hunting Sentinels. Worse, their teacher the White Queen delivers the mute mutant Penance into the hands of the team's greatest foe, Emplate. Plus, the secret of the autistic mutant M will finally be revealed in this issue…but only if you're really good and eat your Brussels sprouts. By James Robinson and Chris Bachalo. **$1.99**

GREEN LANTERN #91

DC COMICS It's a bad day for Kyle Rayner (a.k.a. Green Lantern), as his Green Lantern ring loses its power when a wave of energy contracts across the DC Universe. (Yep, it's that damn "Genesis" crossover again.) Helpless, he's captured and experimented upon by Darkseid's evil flunky Desaad. By Ron Marz, Darryl Banks, Georges Jeanty and Terry Austin. **$1.75**

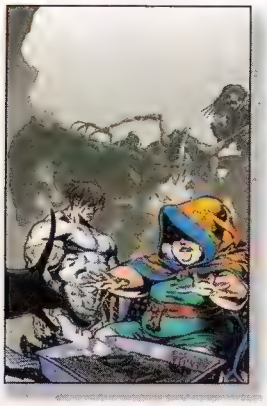
HEPCATS #8

ANTARCTIC PRESS The mystery man who's been stalking Erica breaks into her and Arnie's house. Now Arnie's pretty sure

READ THIS BOOK!

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN #25

MARVEL Turn out the lights, because the party's over on this baby. After this issue, *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* will be no more. Sniff. It's a shame, too, because this was a really great comic, and certainly the best of today's Spider-Man books by about a mile and a half. The series goes out on a high note, as Spider-Man (a.k.a. Peter Parker) is forced to battle the original Green Goblin. Along the way, Peter (who's mere days away from his high school graduation) meets Professor Miles Warren, his soon-to-be science teacher in college and the nine-volt idiot who started the whole messy Spider-Clone fiasco back in *Amazing Spider-Man* #149. By Kurt Busiek, Pat Olliffe and Bob McCleod. Busiek says, "It's the last issue, so we're going out with a bang—Spidey vs. the Green Goblin—and it's gonna happen on the day that Peter is checking out colleges. So he's going to be visiting the campus of Empire State University, where, of course, he'll eventually be going."



MAJOR BUMMER #3

PRIDE AND JOY #4

Erica knows who this guy is, but she sure ain't telling. That, and the characters all have heads of animals. Weird. Good, but definitely weird. By Martin Wagner. **MR $2.95**

HITMAN #19

DC COMICS "Ace of Killers," Part 6 (of 6). Etrigan the Demon has the Ace of Winchesters, the only weapon powerful enough to kill the demonic Mawzir. Now, Tommy Monaghan (a.k.a. Hitman) must form an alliance with Etrigan to get the weapon and save his friends, Catwoman, Tiegel and Natt. By Garth Ennis and John McCrea. And in *Hitman Annual* #1, Tommy is hired to assassinate a bloodthirsty superhero killer named MANKO in a sleepy Texas town. By Garth Ennis and Carlos Ezquerra. ***HITMAN* #19—$2.25; *HITMAN ANNUAL* #1—$3.95**

JINX #2

IMAGE Jinx the bounty hunter takes some time out from her busy schedule of hunting down desperate, sweaty criminals to reveal to her boyfriend Goldfish just why she chose her current career. This issue should also reveal why any rational human would choose to be called "Goldfish." By Brian Michael Bendis. **$2.95**

JLA #11

DC COMICS "Rock of Ages," Part 2 (of 6). The JLA follow their evil duplicates, the Revenge Squad, to a satellite in space, where they discover the Squad's really working for the maniacal Injustice Gang. Back on Earth, Lex Luthor hatches a plot to take over the JLA and begins to examine the "Rock of Ages," a mysterious crystal with cosmic powers. Ooh. By Grant Morrison, Howard Porter and John Dell. **$1.95**

KA-ZAR #6

MARVEL The rampaging, not-so-super villain Rhino drops in on New York City for some unbridled destruction. Alas, Ka-Zar is on hand to stop him, but the Rhino may well be too tough for our hero. We wish the Rhino the best, if for no other reason than it must be pretty embarrassing to lose a fight to a man in a loincloth. By Mark Waid and Pino Rinaldi. "Within the first three pages," Waid says, "the Rhino pretty much destroys the Museum of Natural History, and it gets worse from there. The Rhino is truly on a rampage and it's all Ka-Zar can do to contain him. Ka-Zar is really no match for the Rhino, and we're very clear about that." **$1.99**

KANE #18

DANCING ELEPHANT PRESS As officers Donahue and Perez return to active duty, a bunch of police officers from the New Eden Police Department take the night off. (We suspect they can be reached at Donut World.) While Perez and Donahue clean up the streets, rumors fly that there's something sinister lurking in the city's sewers. We're thinkin' RuPaul. By none other than Paul Grist. **$3.50**

MAGE: THE HERO DEFINED #2

IMAGE Kevin Matchstick (who possesses the qualities and abilities of King Arthur) and his pal Joe Phat (with a name like that, you just know he gets all the babes) meet Kirby Hero, another person with the powers of a legendary warrior. Together, the trio must vanquish a group of evil bird-women (called harpies), and only Matchstick's magical baseball bat has power enough to do the job. Terry Gilliam is set to direct the film version. By Matt Wagner. **$2.50**

MAJOR BUMMER #3

DC COMICS Superhuman slacker Lou Martin gets to fight real, live supervillains, but is his heart into it? While Martin's off brawling, Zinnac and Yoof (the aliens who gave Martin his powers) do some tinkering on video cameras, TV sets and life-support systems to create some wacky device. Funny, funny stuff. By John Arcudi, Doug Mahnke and Tom Nguyen. **$2.50**

POISON ELVES #26

SIRIUS Our buddy Lusipher (who happens to be an elf) tries to put his life back together, while Morachi and Talon plan to make his life a little worse by ending it. Good, clean, wholesome elf-fun. By Drew Hayes. **$2.50**

PREACHER #30

VERTIGO/DC COMICS The trio of Jesse Custer, his girlfriend Tulip and Cassidy the vampire visits New Orleans and encounters a bunch of blood-draining vampires. While there, they meet up with a deformed person whose face looks strangely like...a butt. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $2.50**

PRIDE AND JOY #4 (OF 4)

VERTIGO/DC COMICS Jimmy Kavanaugh, a man with a sordid past, continues to run from a hitman. Here, Kavanaugh's greatest secret is revealed, the mastermind behind the plot is unmasked and we'll finally learn if Jimmy can reconcile with his son. All that, and Scooby gets a well-deserved Scooby Snack! By Garth Ennis and John Higgins. **MR $2.50**

QUANTUM AND WOODY #7

ACCLAIM The alleged scum who might have killed both Quantum and Woody's fathers is alive and living at his mom's house. When Quantum goes looking for vengeance, he gets his butt handed to him by a frying pan-wielding mother. Plus, the return of Woody. Hoo-hah! By Christopher Priest, MD Bright and Greg Adams. **$2.50**

RED ROCKET 7 #1 (OF 7)

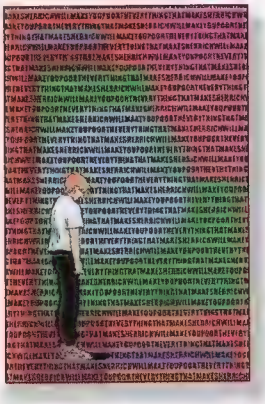
DARK HORSE Rock star Red Rocket 7 is a little, shall we say, unusual. For one thing, he's shot at by aliens right in the middle of one of his concerts. For another, he looks exactly like a man named Red Rocket 5. Not to mention the fact that he's

got a big ol' 7 slapped on his forehead. Could 7 be more than your average human? We'd bet a fiver on it. By Mike and Laura Allred. "There's this big intergalactic science-fiction story taking place," says Mike, "while at the same time, the backdrop contains all of these moments in history, specifically the history of rock 'n' roll. It's kind of epic." **$3.95**

RIB #2

CALIBER Rib, the human-sized worm, travels to Metro City's police station to see how his wormy brothers are being treated by humans. There, he meets Lu, the ex-pugilist (that's a boxer, for you lowbrow folks), who teaches Rib the proper way to take a dive and how to pretend like he's just taken a groin shot. Wow, fun *and* educational! By Andrew Ford and Michael Kellegher. **$2.95**

ROBIN #46



STRANGERS IN PARADISE #8

ROBIN #46

DC COMICS While the rest of DC's heroes find their powers actin' all wacky (thanks to that pesky "Genesis" crossover), the Boy Wonder's faith is shattered when he's unable to prevent gang member Young El from drowning. By Chuck Dixon, Staz Johnson and Bob Smith. Dixon says, "The events in 'Genesis' impact on Robin's life at a very bad time—right when he's beginning to question his value to Batman as a partner. This is all made worse when [Young El] dies and Robin is helpless to prevent it. This issue will impact probably the next six months of *Robin*, as Robin goes on an international voyage of discovery to complete the training that he never really completed." **$1.95**

SANDMAN MYSTERY THEATRE #55

VERTIGO/DC COMICS "The Crone," Part 3 (of 4). The Golden Age Sandman is hot on the trail of a killer with a mad-on for wasting radio actors and executives. The killer doesn't just want to increase the body count, though; he (Or she!) wants to destroy the radio industry altogether. In the midst of the investigation, Sandman gets some helpful information from a reluctant ally. By Steven T. Seagle, Matt Wagner and Guy Davis. **MR $2.50**

STRANGERS IN PARADISE #8

IMAGE What a tangled web these nutty broads weave. Katchoo finally catches up with her friend David, while Katchoo's friend Francine discovers the secret of the pistol-packing mama Rachel Hampton. What she learns spells danger

PAPERBACK PICKS

Trade Paperbacks You Won't Wanna Miss

Kingdom Come (DC Comics) ▼

In the future, the DC heroes retire and a new group of metahumans emerges. These new heroes are so ruthless and bloodthirsty, though, that Superman and his cohorts come out of retirement to put their replacements in jail. What follows is all-out war between the new heroes, true heroes and villains. This book reprints the beautifully painted, critically acclaimed four-issue limited series *Kingdom Come* set in the Elseworlds Universe. By Mark Waid and Alex Ross. **$14.95**

Preacher: Proud Americans (Vertigo/DC Comics)

Reverend Jesse Custer and company go international in this paperback reprinting *Preacher* #18-#26. Traveling to foreign lands, Jesse learns about his father's past and discovers how Cassidy became a vampire. Included in the book is the six-part "Crusaders" story wherein Cassidy's tortured, and Custer scraps with the forces of The Grail. By Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon. **MR $14.95**

Zot! Book Two (Kitchen Sink)

Zot, the boy from outer space, battles a robot gone bad and a skyscraper-headed meanie named Dekko, and learns about Earth culture from a girl named Jenny. Included in this book is "Planet Earth," the story that explains how Zot made it to our planet. *Zot! Book Two* reprints issues #11-#15 and #17-#18 of the original Eclipse *Zot!* series. By Scott McCloud. **$19.95**

Thunderbolts: First Strikes (Marvel)

New York City has a new group of protectors—the Thunderbolts—and they've got the stuff to rid the city of baddies like the Wild Pack and the Wrecking Crew. But the Thunderbolts really aren't all they seem to be. What shocking secret does the team hide behind closed doors? *First Strikes* reprints *Thunderbolts* #1-#2. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Vince Russell. **$4.99**

Squadron Supreme (Marvel)

Their world in shambles, the superhero group the Squadron Supreme decides the only way to save the planet is to take it over. Using their powers, the Squadron works toward creating a utopia where war is nonexistent, crime's eliminated and even death is conquered. But is there any room for freedom in such a world? Superhero stories don't get much more thought-provoking than this. *Squadron Supreme* reprints the entire 12-issue Marvel limited series. By Mark Gruenwald, Bob Hall, Paul Ryan, John Buscema, Dan Bulanadi, John Beatty and Sam De La Rosa. **$24.99**

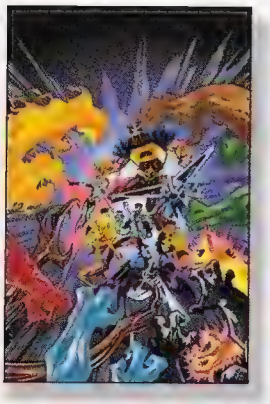
for Katchoo, so Francine goes a-running to Detective Walsh for help. By Terry Moore. **$2.75**

THUNDERBOLTS #7

MARVEL They're bad guys masquerading as good guys. In real life, we'd call them "politicians" or "lawyers." In the superhero world, they're the Thunderbolts (formerly the Masters of Evil), and they want New York City to turn over the Avengers' computer files to them. Are the T-Bolts willing to let New York be destroyed over it? Could be. By Kurt Busiek, Mark Bagley and Vince Russell. **$1.99**

VAMPIRELLA: BLOOD LUST #2 (OF 2)

HARRIS Vampirella's home planet of Drakulon is a bone-dry Hell. Seems Vampi's mom Lilith has plugged up the river Styx for her own evil purposes, depriving the Drakulonians of food. To save her home, Vampirella's going to have to stop her mother's scheme by killing her. By James Robinson and Joe Jusko. **$3.95**



THUNDERBOLTS #7

WILDC.A.T.S/X-MEN: THE MODERN AGE #1

WILDC.A.T.S/X-MEN: THE MODERN AGE #1

IMAGE If we were a superhero team, we'd make sure we never left the house. For one thing, there's supervillains out there. For another, there's *other* superteams out there, and you just know we'd have to fight before we started talking. Anyway, in this issue, the X-Men and WildC.A.T.s join forces to stomp the juice out of the Hellfire Club. By James Robinson, Adam Hughes and Mark Farmer. Robinson says, "It involves an English lord that the WildC.A.T.s are investigating because they feel he might possibly have ties to the Daemonites and the X-Men are investigating because they feel he might have ties to the Hellfire Club. And, of course, those reasons for investigating him soon become one large, dangerous reason." **$4.50**

YOUNG HEROES IN LOVE #5

DC COMICS The Godwave that's sweeping across the DC Universe (yep, you guessed it: "Genesis") hits the Young Heroes, making their powers go wonky and leaving them wondering just what the hell "wonky" actually means. As things get progressively worse, the Heroes' leader Hard Drive gets a visit from his crazy younger brother. By Dan Raspler, Mike Manley and Ande Parks. **$1.75** W

Also shipping in AUGUST

Ash: Cinder and Smoke #4 (Event)
Ash fights the intangible villain Smoke right into the hero's own firehouse. **$2.95**

Avengers #12 (Marvel)
Doctor Doom enlists the aid of the Avengers to fight Galactus. **$2.99**

Batman Books (DC Comics)
Bats saves a woman from committing suicide in *Batman* #547. In *Detective Comics* #714, the Dark Knight teams up with the Martian Manhunter to fight Firefly and a federal fugitive. **$1.95 each**

Cable #47 (Marvel)
Cable must prevent the mutant-hating Bastion from getting his hands on Professor X's secrets. **$1.99**

Captain America #12 (Marvel)
Cap and the Silver Surfer try stopping Galactus, but one of them's gotta sacrifice himself to save the day. **$2.99**

Gambit #2 (Marvel)
In Miami, Gambit takes on the evil being who wants to corrupt his current girlfriend. **$2.50**

Gen^{13} #22 (Image)
The Gen^{13} kids return from space, only to find themselves in the middle of a global war. **$2.50**

Iron Man #12 (Marvel)
Will Iron Man team up with Dr. Doom to duke it out with Galactus? **$2.99**

Snowman #0 (Avatar)
The origin behind the Snowman's elemental force is revealed. **$3.00**

Spawn #65 (Image)
Cog and Spawn have a heart-to-heart, as the two reflect on Spawn's adventures. **$1.95**

Spider-Man Books (Marvel)
The original Doctor Octopus returns from the dead courtesy o' the Hand in *Amazing Spider-Man* #427. Over in *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* #84, the Juggernaut shows up to make mischief, and Spidey has to stop The Living Pharaoh in *Sensational Spider-Man* #20. Norman Osborn, the man who masterminded the recent Spider-Clone jamboree, reappears to make everyone's life miserable in *Spectacular Spider-Man* #250. **$1.99** each; *Amazing Spider-Man*—**$2.25**, *Spectacular Spider-Man*—**$3.25**

Star Wars Books (Dark Horse)
Boba Fett has one of his contracts canceled, but the Fett doesn't know the meaning of the word "canceled" in *Star Wars: Boba Fett—Murder Most Foul*. The Dark Jedi C'baoth teaches Luke Skywalker about the Dark Side in *Star Wars: Dark Force Rising* #4. The decline of the malevolent Sith Empire is documented in *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—The Fall of the Sith Empire* #3, and in *Star Wars: X-Wing Rogue Squadron—In The Empire's Service* #1, the Empire sends an elite division of TIE Fighters against the Rogues. **$2.95** each; *Murder Most Foul*—**$3.95**

Superman Books (DC Comics)
Superman's threatened by the Cyborg in *Superman* #128, and in *Adventures of Superman* #551, the Cyborg travels to Earth in the circuitry of Superman's containment suit. The Big "S" discovers the ability to open portals to other dimensions in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #72. And rounding out your Super-month, *Action Comics* #738 sees Lois Lane travel to Australia and Jimmy Olsen threatened by Intergang. **$1.95 each**

Uncanny X-Men #348 (Marvel)
Rogue, Gambit, Joseph (formerly Magneto) and reporter Trish Tilby are trapped in Magneto's former Antarctic base. **$1.99**

Witchblade #17 (Image)
Witchblade wearer Sara Pezzini returns from Rio and walks right into a New York City gang war. **$2.50**

Wolverine #117 (Marvel)
Wolverine and his pals must put the kibosh on Bastion's dastardly plan. **$1.99**

X-Men #68 (Marvel)
Iceman and the mutant Dr. Reyes team up with the deranged Marrow to find a mysterious woman. **$1.99**

Xena: Warrior Princess #1 (Topps)
Xena and her pal Gabrielle visit the Summer Festival, but the sisters of the Gorgon Medusa show up to spoil the fun. **$2.95**

WIZARD® #74

Nightwing

cover by Scott McDaniel!

FANTASTIC FOUR

4

cover by Alan Davis!

FREE FAIRCHILD SHE-HULK CHROMIUM CARD

Man! GLOW IN THE DARK EVIL ERNIE

#1/2 OFFER!

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DC Comics Presents:

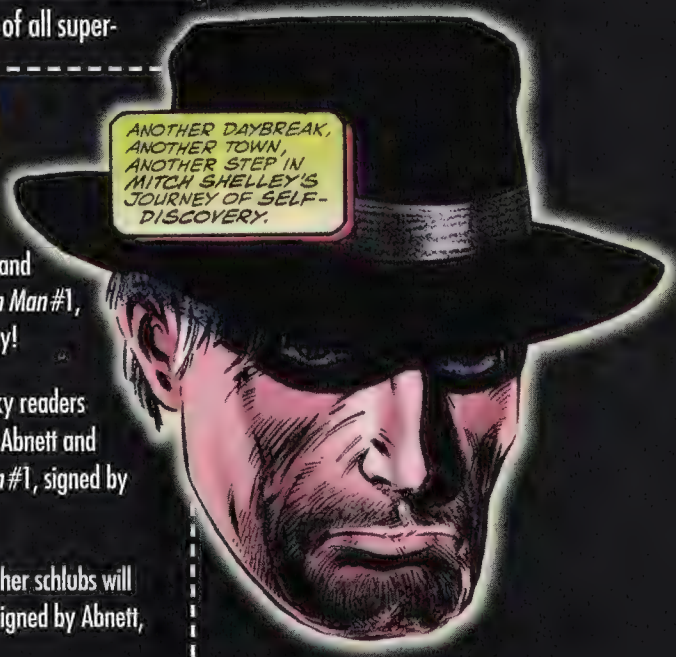
The "Choose Resurrection Man's Next Power" Contest!

DC's Resurrection Man has to have the coolest superpower on Earth going for him– every time the guy dies (Which is quite a bit, believe us!), he's reborn with a brand-new power! Kinda makes it a wee bit difficult for those villains to beat him, huh?

Here's how this contest works: We want *you* to come up with the coolest superpower that Resurrection Man could possess. Super strength. Fire breath. The ability to turn water into Mello Yello. Whatever. The most creative of all superpowers will win the...

Grand Prize (1):

One lucky reader will win an original Butch Guice drawing showing Resurrection Man using the power that the winner has chosen. Plus, he'll also walk away with an autographed, original story script signed by Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning, and an autographed copy of *Resurrection Man* #1, signed by Abnett, Lanning and Guice! Resurrect me, baby!



First Prize (5): Five other lucky readers will win an autographed original story script, signed by Abnett and Lanning, and an autographed copy of *Resurrection Man* #1, signed by Abnett, Lanning and Guice! Not too shabby!

Second Prize (10): Ten other schlubs will receive an autographed copy of *Resurrection Man* #1, signed by Abnett, Lanning and Guice!

This contest is sponsored by DC Comics, bringing good things to life.

Fill this out and put it in an envelope. Send to: Resurrection Man Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Deadline is September 30, 1997.

Born Again Lawyers

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics, their immediate families and Shirley MacLaine. You nuts, lady. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Resurrection Man Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. Beware the trouser fajita! Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by September 30, 1997.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on originality and creativity from among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press. Winning entries will be selected on or about October 15, 1997.

For a list of winners, available after October 15, 1997, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Resurrection Man Winners List, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Resurrection Man's Next Power Entry Form

DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 30, 1997!

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

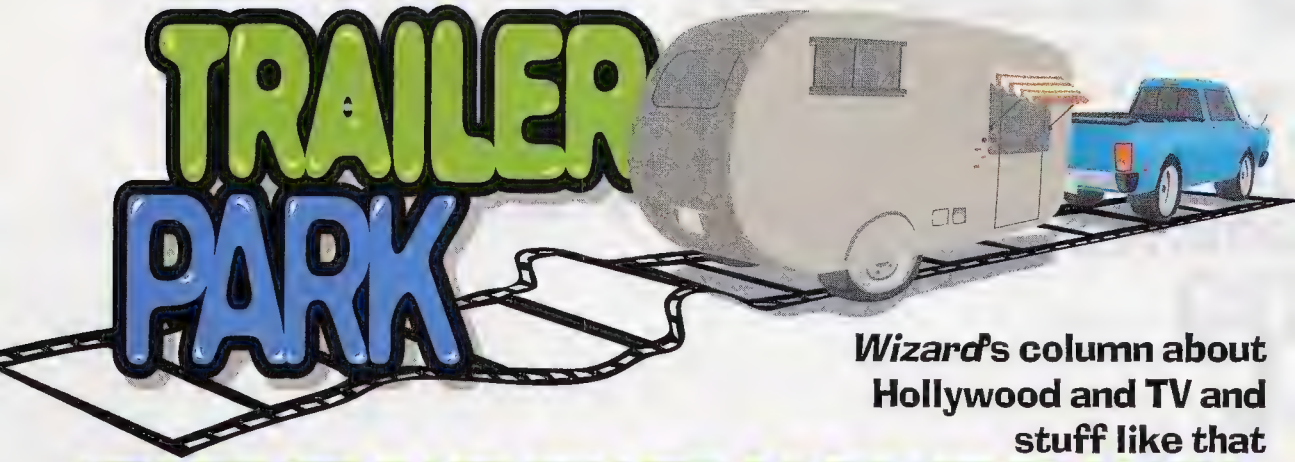
City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Resurrection Man's superpower _____

TRAILER PARK



***Wizard*'s column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that**

'FAITHFUL' FURY FILM ON THE WAY

By Rob Allstetter

Can **David Hasselhoff** do for eye patches what he did for red-suited lifeguards? Hasselhoff, the star of the worldwide syndicated hit "Baywatch," has been chomping cigars lately in the title role of **"Nick Fury,"** a telefilm for Fox based on the Marvel Comics character.

The movie, which wrapped up a 26-day shoot in Vancouver, British Columbia, in the middle of June, is expected to be completed by September. Fox has yet to set an airdate, but "Nick Fury" might be a candidate for the November sweeps.

"Nick Fury" figures to be much closer to its comic book roots than Marvel's previous Fox telefilm, "Generation X," which prominently featured characters who had never been in the team's comic book series before. The script for "Nick Fury" was written by David Goyer, a longtime comic book fan who also penned the comics-inspired "The Crow: City of Angels" and "Blade."

Hasselhoff, relaxing in his trailer outside the set in Surrey, British Columbia, said he was determined to take on the Fury role in a serious fashion.

"We had a meeting with Marvel, and they said make your version of 'Nick Fury,' but do it with a certain dedication to the comic book," said Hasselhoff, who wears Fury's trademark eye patch and tested the white-haired temples, forsaking them only after they looked too campy.

"We went with the eye patch and the history of him to try to capture the depth of the character. Also, with the clothes, the guns and the leather—he wears such great outfits that we took a lot from the comic books."

"Doesn't he look just like Nick Fury?" marveled **Lisa Rinna**, the "Melrose Place" star who plays Val, a S.H.I.E.L.D. agent with a romantic past with Fury. "I think we're very faithful; the story comes directly out of the comics. It was a really well-written script, and I think the fans of Nick Fury will be really happy."

Donne Gregory/Fox

Hasselhoff's (left) white temples were deemed "too campy" for Nick Fury telefilm.

Sources say that the budget of "Nick Fury" is one of the largest ever for a Fox telefilm, pushing $6 million. One of the key sets is the war room of the S.H.I.E.L.D. Helicarrier, which was built inside a generator plant in Surrey and is three-levels-tall.

"For television, it is a big movie," said Australian director Rod Hardy. "It's got a lot of visual effects and a lot of stunts. Fox has spent some money to make it feel right, which I'm really pleased about, and I think we've pulled off something interesting.

"In television, we've had so much of the disease of the week moviemaking, and there's only so much they can promote of that. The audiences aren't coming to them as rapidly as they used to.

"So, now it's more event stuff—something like this project. It's a fantasy, so it's something you can turn on, then put your feet up, have a chuckle and get involved in the adventure."

In addition to Hasselhoff and Rinna, the cast of "Nick Fury" includes Sandra Hess ("Beastmaster 3" and "Mortal Kombat: Annihilation") as Viper, Garry Chalk as "Dum Dum" Dugan, Ron Canada as Gabe Jones, Neil Roberts as Pierce and Tracy Waterhouse as Kate Neville.

The film's story has Fury coming out of retirement and rejoining S.H.I.E.L.D. to stop Viper—the daughter of his dead nemesis Baron Von Strucker—from unleashing the Death's Head Virus.

David Roessell, who produced "Generation X," is also producing "Nick Fury." He said that "Fury" will be set in more real terms and

will be more faithful than "Generation X" was to its comics origins.

"'Nick Fury' is more of a traditional idea of what an action story is about. Nick Fury could possibly exist," Roessell said. "It is pure, get-the-bad-guys action."

This film could be just the start of a "Nick Fury" franchise. Hasselhoff said he has signed for five "Fury" movies, and is even thinking of trying to make the next one a theatrical film.

"There are so many stories [to tell] with Nick Fury," said Hardy. "If the audience comes to this, watches it and embraces it, it would be silly not to make it an ongoing process, whether that's a series, another two-hour TV-movie or a feature film."

As with all Marvel projects, **Stan Lee** and Avi Arad are executive producers. Lee even has a small part in the film as a S.H.I.E.L.D. communications officer.

MIGHTY MARVEL UPDATE

Larry Brody has written a story bible for a possible **"Ghost Rider"** animated series. The character has appeared in animated form the past two years on the "Fantastic Four" and "The Incredible Hulk" animated series, with **Richard Grieco** providing the voice both times.

"We're talking about doing 'Ghost Rider,' but it might wind up being direct-to-video," said Brody. "There are some very diabolical elements, and you can't have devils on Saturday morning television. I'm not sure you can have a flaming skull, either."

Brody's version of Ghost Rider is the original Johnny Blaze version, not the current Dan Ketch spirit of vengeance.

"That was always my choice," he said. "Johnny Blaze is more colorful and dynamic. He already has great skills and is a hero in and of himself."

The Ghost Rider cartoon may be too racy for TV.

In other animation news, **Lou Ferrigno** is returning to do the voice of the green Hulk and Michael Donovan will be doing the voice of the gray Hulk in the second season of **"The Incredible Hulk"** animated series on the United Paramount Network.

Cree Summer is replacing Lisa Zane as the voice of the She-Hulk, who will appear in all eight second-season episodes. The voice cast also includes Neal McDonough as Bruce Banner, Matt Frewer as The Leader, Mark Hamill as Gargoyle, Richard Moll as Abomination, Philece Sampler as Betty Ross, Kathy Ireland as Ogress, Luke Perry as Rick Jones, John Vernon as General Thunderbolt Ross and Thom Barry as Gabriel Jones.

"SubCulture" and "The Darkness" are in Hollywood's hands.

TOP COW PROJECTS MOOVING ALONG

Marc Silvestri's **Top Cow Productions** remains in active discussions to move all of its main characters into television or movies. As previously reported in "Trailer Park," **"Witchblade"** in live-action and Nathan Cabrera's **"SubCulture"** in animation are currently the Top Cow television projects with the most heat.

A "Cyberforce" animated series had been in development at Graz Entertainment for Fox, and was even featured on CNN. But Graz, which produced "X-Men" for Saban Entertainment and Fox, has disbanded, with its owners folding into DreamWorks. According to Top Cow's Brad Foxhoven, the "Cyberforce" series is now considered dead. However, Foxhoven said a live-action "Cyberforce" movie is in the early stages of development.

A deal for a feature film based on ***The Darkness***, Top Cow's latest smash comic by Silvestri and Garth Ennis, is "pretty close," according to Top Cow's Tim Fernandez.

"Weapon Zero" is being projected as either an animated series or a live-action movie of the week, and "21," backed by a toy line, remains a potential animated series from Film Roman, which produces "The Simpsons."

SPAWN PUSHED AROUND

New Line Cinema has again moved up the release date of the **"Spawn"** live-action movie, this time from Aug. 8 to Aug 1. The film, which stars Michael Jai White as Spawn and John Leguizamo as The Clown, was originally scheduled to be released on Aug. 22.

A hard-rocking soundtrack to "Spawn" will be released on July 29 from Immortal Records. Contributors include Marilyn Manson, Filter, Rollins Band and Korn.

Meanwhile, the "Spawn" animated series on HBO has been a "big ratings success," according to sources. HBO Home Video is releasing the original "Spawn" episodes on home video on Aug. 5. The 147-minute uncut version will retail for $22.97; a PG-13-rated version will retail for $19.94.

It's likely the first six episodes will be rerun on HBO this fall, and another six new episodes are in development.

HBO SEEKS OUT COMICS

HBO Animation, riding the crest of its successful "Spawn," is looking to the comic book world for more series.

Sources have confirmed that HBO has been in advanced discussions with David Mack and Terry Moore about animated series based on their respective ***Kabuki*** and ***Strangers in Paradise*** comic books. The prospective series would likely be adult in nature—like the comics—and air in late-night spots like "Spawn."

Ralph Bakshi's "Spicy City" is currently in HBO's late-night lineup.

Meanwhile, HBO's second animated series, Ralph Bakshi's **"Spicy City,"** continues its first-run episodes into August. They include "Sex Drive," "Tears of a Clone," "Love is a Download" and "Raven's Revenge." The futuristic anthology series stars Michelle Phillips ("Knots Landing") as continuing character Raven.

Everett Collection

It's "nice to have it over with," says Cain (left) of "Lois & Clark."

FINAL FAREWELL FOR 'LOIS & CLARK'

"The Family Hour," the series finale of **"Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman,"** aired on ABC on June 14. The episode had Lois and Clark discovering they were physically incapable of having a child, but ended with them discovering a baby left in a Superman-crested blanket at their house.

Like most of the "Lois & Clark" episodes in 1997, the finale generated little audience interest, placing 81st out of 115 shows for the week in the Nielsen ratings.

Dean Cain, who played Clark Kent and Superman, did not seem entirely unhappy about the series ending. "Actually, it's amazingly freeing and kind of nice to have it over with," he told *Variety*.

"Lois & Clark" will air in reruns beginning next fall on the TNT cable network.

FOOT SOLDIERS ON MARCH

Jim Krueger, creator of **"Foot Soldiers,"** has entered an agreement with Michael Uslan and Ben Melniker, executive producers of the Batman movies, to develop a live-action feature film and an animated television series based on Krueger's characters.

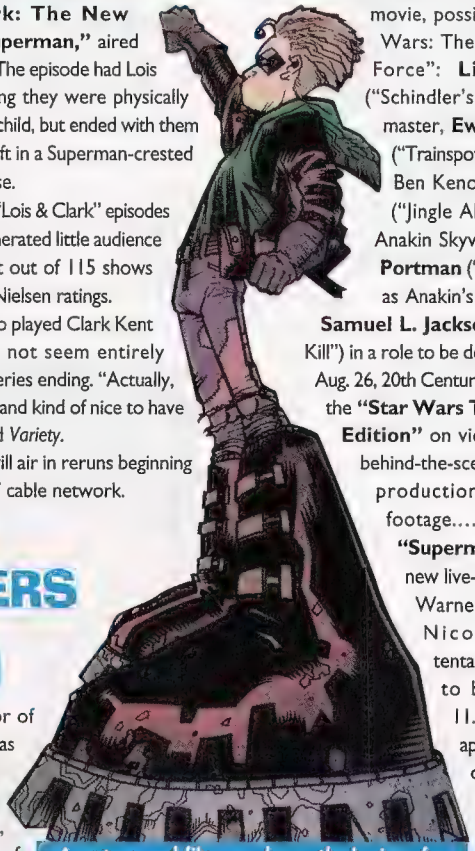
Krueger met Uslan at a bus station after a toy fair 2 1/2 years ago, and they began sharing their affinity for the old "Jonny Quest" series. Unaware of Uslan's position, Krueger showed him sketches from *Foot Soldiers*—a dark story set in the future, where three teenagers assume the powers of dead heroes and battle the ruling authority—and that started their relationship.

Krueger said he feels his characters can translate successfully to the big—or small—screen.

"You can look at them and understand how their powers work; there is a simplicity," Krueger said. "You see a lot of heroes [where] you don't understand how their powers work. There is a utility to the Foot Soldiers that would translate to a movie.

"Plus, it's a fairy tale of superheroes—and this is a big gulp—just like 'Star Wars' is a fairy tale of science fiction. All the classic archetypes are there."

Foot Soldiers, originally published by Dark Horse, becomes an ongoing, bimonthly comic book series from Image beginning in September.



A cartoon and film may be on the horizon for "Foot Soldiers."

SHORT TAKES

According to *Entertainment Weekly*, the following actors will likely appear in the next Star Wars movie, possibly called "Star Wars: The Balance of the Force": **Liam Neeson** ("Schindler's List") as a Jedi master, **Ewan McGregor** ("Trainspotting") as a young Ben Kenobi, **Jake Lloyd** ("Jingle All the Way") as Anakin Skywalker, **Natalie Portman** ("Beautiful Girls") as Anakin's future wife and **Samuel L. Jackson** ("A Time to Kill") in a role to be determined....On Aug. 26, 20th Century Fox will release the **"Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition"** on video, including a behind-the-scenes look at the production of the new footage....Production on **"Superman Lives,"** the new live-action film from Warner Bros. starring Nicolas Cage, is tentatively scheduled to begin on Oct. 11....The Flash will appear on the second season of the "Superman" animated series on Kids' WB, but it will be unclear if it is the Wally West or Barry Allen version....A representative of Warner Bros. said the status of **"Justice League of America"** on television remains unclear after CBS did not place "JLA" on its fall schedule. Whether the pilot movie of "JLA" will air or if the property will be developed as a mid-season replacement series remains to be determined....Published reports say James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger will reteam to make **"Terminator 3"** for Fox, which starts filming in early '98. This places Cameron's anticipated **"Spider-Man"** film on further hold for MGM....**Patrick Stewart** will reportedly receive $12 million for starring as Capt. Picard in the next Star Trek film....**"Conan The Adventurer,"** the syndicated live-action TV series starring Ralph Moeller ("Best of the Best 2"), has begun production in Mexico....**"Casper: A Spirited Beginning"** is a live-action, direct-to-video sequel to the "Casper" movie. It will be released by 20th Century Fox on Sept. 9. The film features Steve Guttenberg, Lori Loughlin, Michael McKean and Rodney Dangerfield....Published reports say that George Clooney has been approached for the lead role in the **"Planet of the Apes"** remake; Arnold Schwarzenegger was linked to film, but bowed out due to scheduling conflicts....*JLA* writer **Grant Morrison** reports he is writing the screenplay for "Lawnmower Man 3" and that his Vertigo series *Invisibles* is being adapted for British TV....In May, **"Animaniacs"** won the Daytime Emmy award for best children's animated program, while Louie Anderson won in the animated program performer category for "Life with Louie." **W**

The future "Star Wars" cast: (clockwise from top) Neeson, Portman and McGregor.

Photos: Everett Collection

After David Hasselhoff deemed Rob Allstetter "overqualified" for "Baywatch," Rob scored a "Melrose Place" cameo as Amanda's personal pool lifeguard.

THE BAT-BOX

The "Batman" movie franchise still packs box-office clout, but it might finally be starting to show its age.

The fourth film in the series, "Batman & Robin," was expected to gross at least $150 million domestically after opening the weekend of June 20 in first place with a take of $43.6 million. While that made it the top opening movie of the weekend (with the seventh largest opening in history), roughly doubling the surprising Julia Roberts hit, "My Best Friend's Wedding," it ranked just third among the Batman films in terms of opening-weekend gross.

Christine Loss: Batman & Robin ™ & © 1997 DC Comics.

The titanic trio of Batman, Robin and Batgirl brought in $43.6 million in their film's opening weekend.

"Batman Forever" opened in 1995 with $52.8 million, "Batman Returns" opened in 1992 with $45.7 million and "Batman" opened in 1989 with $40.5 million.

It also appears that "Batman & Robin" will be the first Batflick not to wind up as the year's top grosser. "The Lost World: Jurassic Park" opened to record numbers over Memorial Day weekend and, at press time, had pulled in $204.9 million total.

• Speculation continues on a possible fifth Batman movie. "Access Hollywood" reports that Madonna might be considered for the role of Harley Quinn, and rumors continue that Jack Nicholson will reprise his Joker role for hallucinogenic scenes induced by Scarecrow. *Entertainment Weekly* reports the next movie will likely be called "Batman Triumphant."

• CBS has purchased the network television rights to "Batman & Robin," which will likely air in the 1998-99 season. The film will probably be on home video by November.

• The soundtrack to "Batman & Robin" debuted at ninth place on the *Billboard* album chart with sales of 74,000. The album was supported by music videos by the Smashing Pumpkins, Bone Thugs-n-Harmony and R. Kelly. The soundtrack for "Batman Forever" debuted at No. 15 in June 1995, eventually peaking at fifth in its third week. Prince's 1989 soundtrack to "Batman" was a number one hit.

• "Entertainment Tonight" did not include a segment on "Batman & Robin" the entire week leading up to its premiere. George Clooney, the film's star, had earlier boycotted "ET," produced by Paramount Television, because of the treatment he received from another Paramount series, "Hard Copy."

• Jeep Swenson, who played Bane, isn't the only former professional wrestler to appear in "Batman & Robin." Jesse "The Body" Ventura plays a guard at Arkham Asylum.

• Arnold Schwarzenegger, who plays Mr. Freeze, made up his private jet in a "Batman & Robin" motif and flew to his native Graz, Austria, where a sports stadium was named after him in celebration of the European premiere of the film and Schwarzenegger's 50th birthday. ■ *RA*

SPECIAL REPORT
on next page

SPECIAL REPORT: SPACE ODYSSEY

Called 'Jesus in space,' Silver Surfer coasts the spaceways to find his homeworld in new Fox cartoon

By Rob Allstetter

Larry Brody has come full circle. As one of the original Marvel Comics fanboys, he thrilled to seeing his letters published in a few early-1960s issues of *Amazing Spider-Man*. Now, after a long, successful and varied television writing career, he gets to go back to his comic book roots, developing the "Silver Surfer" animated series for Saban Entertainment and the Fox Children's Network.

"After 30 years, I'm doing the thing I always wanted to do," he says, laughing. "This is a great character."

"Silver Surfer," following "X-Men" and "Spider-Man" in Fox's Saturday morning lineup, is tentatively scheduled to get a sneak peek in November and begin its weekly run of 13 first-season episodes in the 11:30 a.m. (ET) time slot early in 1998.

"It's very faithful to the feeling of the original comics," Brody says. "We have a Silver Surfer who is either Hamlet or—and we didn't tell Fox Broadcasting Standards this—he's Jesus in space.

"On this show, you will see more dialogue than any cartoon you've ever seen. Every week the Surfer faces a new moral dilemma."

As the Silver Surfer tries to get home, he is joined by (below, from left) Beta Ray Bill, Drax and Pip the Troll.

That's not to say the series won't have action or visual bang. Many of Marvel's cosmic characters will be appearing, and Brody says the series will employ extensive computer-generated animation for the outer space scope.

"We are trying to be cosmic. That's the way it is [Jack] Kirby-esque, not necessarily in just following his illustrations," Brody says, referring to the Surfer's visual creator. "He loved to get really big like that."

Brody, who has written for every Star Trek series except "Deep Space Nine," and who developed the mid-1970s "Star Trek" animated series, sees similarities between "Star Trek" and "Silver Surfer."

In fact, he compares the Surfer to original "Trek" Captain James T. Kirk. "The Surfer says, 'This is wrong and has to be made right,' just like Kirk would. At Fox, the women executives just hate superhero shows. But the women love this guy; he's so sensitive."

Just before embarking on a vacation to England, Brody sat down at his computer and ran through the first season of "Silver Surfer."

The first three episodes of the series are "Origin of the Silver Surfer," and follow the Surfer's comics origin of sacrificing himself as herald to the planet-devouring Galactus to save his world, Zenn-La. He then must also save the Earth, setting up the series hook: Galactus allows him to leave his servitude, but doesn't let Surfer know where Zenn-La is, and he must try to find his own way home.

Also, the Fantastic Four are not involved. "'Silver Surfer' is the name of the show," Brody says. "We wanted to do something new, and the Fantastic Four story has been rehashed and feels old. When Stan [Lee] and Moebius did their version of the Surfer [in a 1988 mini-series], there was no Fantastic Four, and it was very interesting."

From there, the Surfer spends three episodes with wisecracking imp Pip the Troll, then soars into "Planet of Dr. Moreau" and "Learning Curve," a two-parter. Established Marvel cosmic characters Mentor and Drax the Destroyer are introduced,

Silver Surfer visits the Watcher's Universal Library and Thanos is established as the series' main villain, though not with the obsession to kill off half the universe he is portrayed as having in the comics.

"We can't have Thanos in love with Death [the female Marvel version] on Saturday morning television, so Death becomes Lady Chaos," Brody says. "Thanos is a weird psycho. He tries to destroy as much as possible so the statue of Lady Chaos will come to life and have pity and love him."

The next episode is "Inner Visions," in which Thanos attacks a planet of Dreamers, where inhabitants are hooked up to a dream machine. The Surfer enlists the help of the only Dreamer willing to aid him—Beta Ray Bill, the noble alien who possesses similar powers to that of the thunder god Thor.

The Surfer is accompanied in the next two episodes by Nova, the Frankie Raye version who is the new herald of Galactus. "Anti-Body," a story written by famed sci-fi author Harlan Ellison, has the Surfer enlisted to help a dying Galactus, and then "Second Foundation" finds the Surfer and Nova trying to find Zenn-La and winding up on the home planet of the Skrull race.

Brody reveals Nova is one of his favorite characters.

"If I could call the show 'Silver Surfer & Nova,' I would," Brody says with a laugh. "The Surfer is very philosophical, and Nova is an 18-year-old wiseguy. They work great together with their dialogue.

"And he's in love with Shalla Bal [on his homeworld Zenn-La], but here's Nova, this gorgeous girl who really likes him. She wants to help him find Zenn-La, but keeping him for herself is not a bad idea either."

Next up is "Radical Justice," where the Surfer is captured and put on trial for his crimes as Galactus' herald. "He learns to forgive himself and why he has to live and put the past behind him," Brody says.

D.C. Fontana, the story editor for the original "Star Trek" series, wrote the story for "The Forever War," which guest-stars space hero Adam Warlock. "Return to Zenn-La" then has the Surfer arriving on a planet he thinks is Zenn-La.

The first season closes with "End of Eternity," in which Thanos—Gulp!—destroys the universe.

"If we last the full 65 [episode order], we'll return the universe to normal, and leave Thanos alone for a while," Brody says. "Then we'll bring him back and build a whole season around the Infinity Gauntlet."

"Silver Surfer" is part of a recent agreement between Fox and Marvel for several new animated shows. The character is also the subject of an upcoming live-action film from 20th Century Fox, and Marvel sees the Surfer as a franchise.

The animated series figures to be a high-profile part of Fox's lineup, and Brody says he's up to the challenge. "I really hate to say this, because everyone else does, but we're really trying to do in animation what's never been done before. This series is about ideas. Not just action." **W**

Thanos is poised to be the Surfer's prime nemesis.

GREENSBURG COMICS & GAMING CONVENTION

August 29th - September 1st

Greengate Expo Center
Greensburg, PA

1997

August 29th- September 1st
(A FOUR DAY EVENT)

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MICHAEL GOLDEN
JOHN MC CREA
GLENN FABRY
MIKE DEODATO, JR.

ADDITIONAL GUESTS

Stan Sakia
Buzz
Bob McLeod
Gus Vasque
Derek Fisher
Dan Fraga
Matt Hawkins
Brom
Michael Biar
Many, More !!
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CHARACTER PROFILE:

Captain Marvel

BY MATTHEW BRADY

VITAL STATS

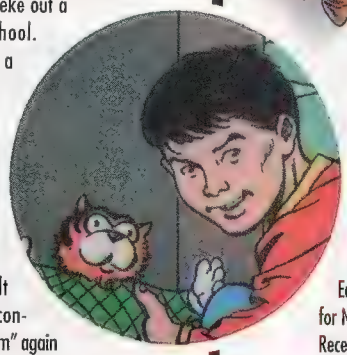
[illegible] William (Billy) Batson
[illegible] 14
[illegible] 5' 4" (as Billy), 6' 2" (as Captain Marvel)
[illegible] 107 lbs. (as Billy), 210 lbs. (as Captain Marvel)
[illegible] Black
[illegible] Blue
[illegible] (original version) *Whiz Comics* #2 in 1940; (modern version) *The Power of Shazam!* graphic novel in 1994
[illegible]TLY APPEARING IN: *The Power of Shazam!* (DC Comics)
[illegible] Captain Nazi, Black Adam, Dr. Sivana and Mr. Mind

ORIGIN

Billy and Mary Batson became orphaned as young children when their parents were killed by Theo Adam during an archeological dig in Egypt. As Mary was in Egypt at the time of his parents' death, Billy assumed she was dead as well. The children were brought up separately, unaware of each other's situation. Mary was adopted by the Bromfield family, while Billy was entrusted to his uncle Ebenezer. However, Billy's uncle took the money in the boy's trust fund as his own, and tossed Billy out onto the street.

Billy managed to survive, selling papers and surviving on scraps of food, barely managing to eke out a living, while keeping himself in school. One stormy night, Billy was guided to a mysterious cave under the city, where the wizard Shazam bestowed incredible powers upon Billy: the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the stamina of Atlas, the power of Zeus, the courage of Achilles and the speed of Mercury. Whenever Billy speaks the wizard's name, he is transformed into the adult Captain Marvel, whose looks Billy subconsciously based on his father. Saying "Shazam" again returns Billy to his young state.

From that day on, Billy became the Earth's mightiest mortal, Captain Marvel.



Billy Batson (in circle inset) modeled Captain Marvel to look like his father.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Billy's first action as Captain Marvel was to track down Theo Adam, who had been transformed into the evil Black Adam by the power of a mystical Egyptian scarab. Thanks to the intervention of Shazam's spirit, Adam's powers and voice were removed, and Captain Marvel turned him over to the police for the murder of Billy's parents.

Despite his initial hesitation and reluctance, Billy quickly grew into the role of Captain Marvel, and took his place among the heroes of the DC Universe. For a time, he worked with the Justice League, but shortly resigned, feeling that his efforts could best be used to protect and serve his home, Fawcett City.

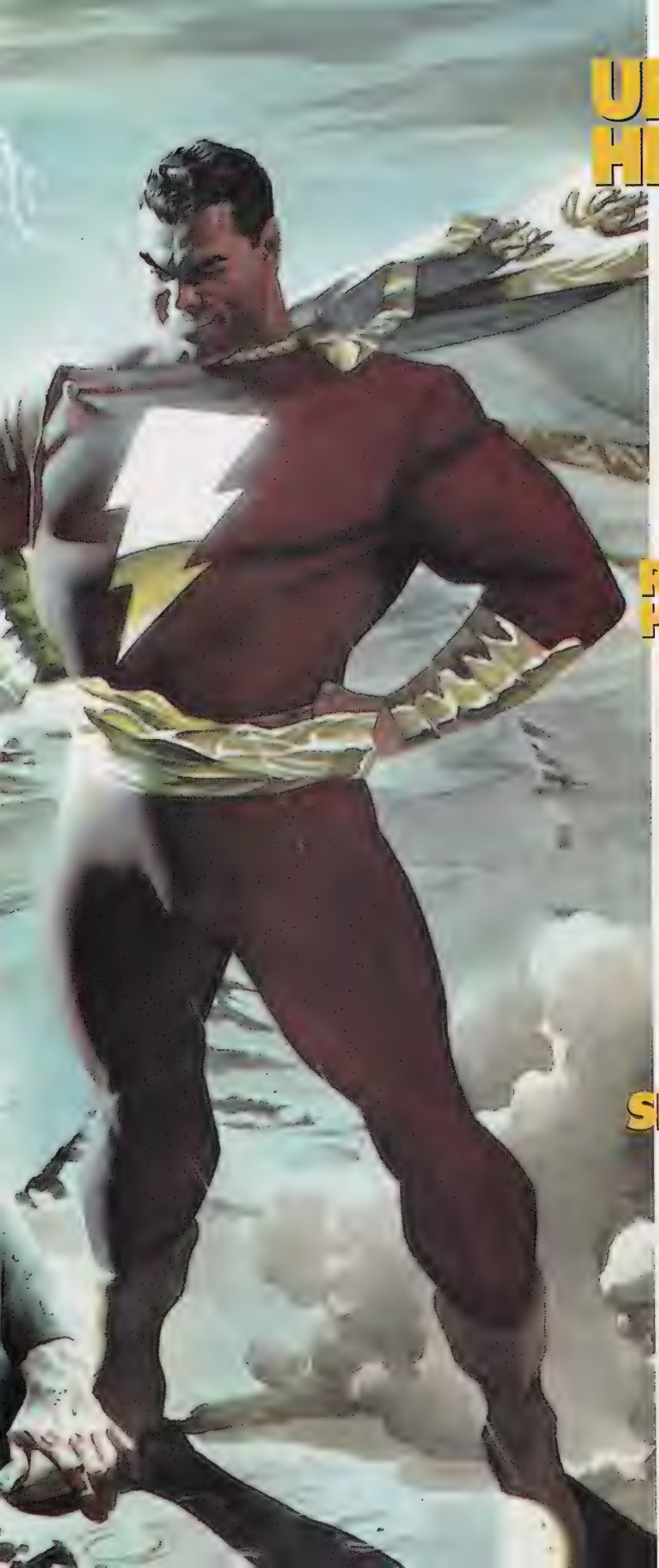
Shortly after his debut in Fawcett, Billy located his sister Mary and revealed his secret to her, giving her a portion of his power. Now, whenever she says "Shazam," she is transformed by the same mystical energy into Mary Marvel.

While the Marvels were engaged in a battle with the revived Captain Nazi, a bystander, Freddy Freeman, was crippled when the villain collided with him. Feeling responsible for his situation, the two heroes bestowed a portion of their powers on Freddy. Now, whenever Freddy says the words "Captain Marvel," he transforms into Captain Marvel Jr., Fawcett's superpowered teen.

Billy also realized that being a hero isn't all fun and games, and was partly responsible for the arrival of the Venusian worm, Mr. Mind, on Earth. Also, his relationship with Freddy soured, and Freddy left Fawcett City for New York, intent on making his own path.

Recently, Billy's entire life was turned upside down when Dr. Sivana used mystical means to rewrite history and made sure Theo Adam didn't kill Billy and Mary's parents. As a result, Billy's parents received the powers of Shazam, and became Fawcett City's husband-and-wife superhero team. However, Shazam realized something was wrong with the alternate timeline, and ultimately, Billy's father corrected Sivana's tampering, erasing himself and Billy's mother from the timeline.

Having noted what had happened, however, Shazam arranged for history to be altered so that Billy would be taken in by Mary's adoptive parents, the Bromfields. To this day, Billy and Mary continue to live under the same roof, as brother and sister superheroes.



UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

Following August's "Genesis" crossover, look for Billy to get a crush on Bulletman's daughter, an Air Force test pilot, in issue #32. The bad news? Billy starts dating her as Captain Marvel, which doesn't sit too well with Bulletman, who knows that Billy, and therefore Captain Marvel, is only 14 years old. The issue will also introduce a new villain, Windshear. After this, look for stories spotlighting Mary, Billy and Captain Marvel Jr. This fall, Cap teams up with Starman for a four-part crossover in Opal City, and will round out the year with the return of Mr. Mind in a storyline called "Mr. Mind Goes to Washington." Additionally, look for Cecebeck from last year's "Legends of the Dead Earth" annual to make a visit soon.

RECOMMENDED HIGHLIGHTS

Looking for some choice slices of big red cheese? Check out these wholesome favorites hand-picked by *Shazam!* writer Jerry Ordway and the huddled, troubled masses here at *Wizard*. By the way, every issue is worth the price of admission just for Ordway's incredible painted covers.

***The Power of Shazam!* graphic novel**—This one has it all! Ordway retells and paints the origins of Captain Marvel, Black Adam, Sivana and the rest.

***The Power of Shazam!* #4**—Mary Marvel hits the scene! Check out how Billy and Mary meet up and just how she manages to nab a portion of the power of Shazam.

***The Power of Shazam!* #6-#7**—Freddy Freeman becomes Captain Marvel Jr. in this two-parter that returns Captain Nazi to the modern day. Plus: Captain Marvel grows a beard!

***The Power of Shazam!* #15-#17**—It's an alien invasion from Venus—and leading the charge is...Dr. Sivana???

SIMILAR TASTES

Want some more goodies to go along with your heaping helping of *Shazam*? Ordway suggests you check out these books for some great stories and big fun: *Big Bang Comics*, *The Savage Dragon* ("Even though Erik Larsen is an evil version of me."), *Astro City*, *Leave it to Chance* and the novel *The Seventh Scroll* by Wilbur Smith. You can also pick up the first *Prime* series for an enjoyable look at a kid in an adult hero's body.

Matthew Brady, a frequent Wizard *contributor, becomes a fat, balding, out-of-shape comic book collector whenever he says the magic word "Gumby!"*

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MANGA SCENE

A GUIDE TO JAPANESE COMICS AND ANIMATION BOTH PAST AND PRESENT

By Carl Gustav Horn

SAFE AT HOME?

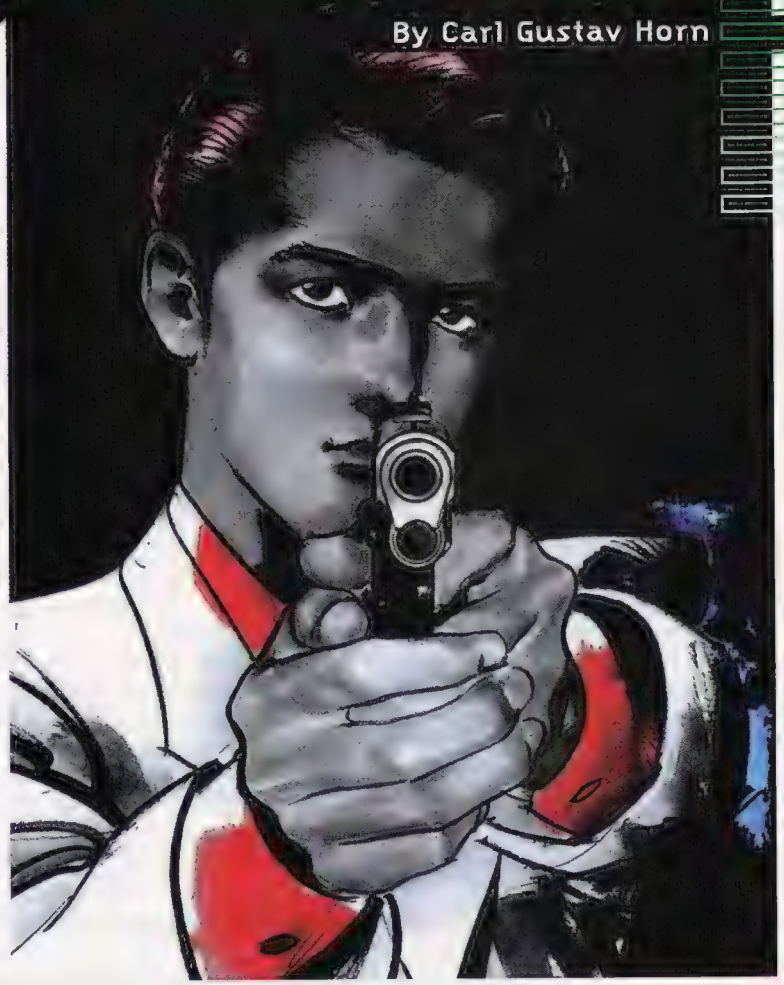
Two young men must take over Japan to save their world in 'Sanctuary'

Even though the word "sanctuary" means a place of refuge, in the manga series *Sanctuary*, the term takes on a more frightening meaning.

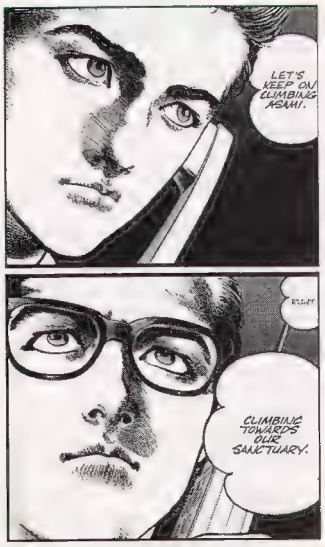
The story begins in Cambodia, 1976, where two Japanese boys named Asami and Hojo are digging a grave, rifles pointed at their backs. These were the infamous killing fields of the communist Khmer Rouge regime; the Rouge sought to make society equal by shipping anyone with an education to forced-labor camps in the country. When you were too weak to work anymore, they'd smash your brains out with a hoe.

Flash forward to the 1990s. The boys' parents had been unlucky: foreigners caught up among the million dead of the Cambodian genocide. Asami and Hojo were the lucky ones—they managed to escape back to Japan. But the scars remained. The boys, who had all sense leave their lives, looked at Japan and saw it as one big, fat target, a country of complacency that could someday be attacked by a world jealous of its wealth. The two decided there was only one way they could truly build a sanctuary for themselves—they must *take over Japan*.

Now in their 20s, they're ready to set their plan in motion. With no one suspecting they're working together, Hojo will take the shadow path, becoming a *Yakuza*, a member of the Japanese Mafia. Asami will stay in the light, entering the Japanese Diet, their political parliament. In a country where both arenas are controlled by old men, they'll each climb to the top, one gunshot and one deal at a time.



By joining the Japanese Mafia, Hojo holds up his end of the pact to take over Japan.



Brothers Hojo and Asami (bottom) reaffirm their ambitious goal.

The epic 3,000-page saga of *Sanctuary* is written by Sho "Buronson" Fumimura (*Fist of the North Star*), who keeps all the action of *Fist*, but makes a right turn into hard-boiled reality. Ruthless as they may be, Asami and Hojo have no intention of taking over crime and politics in Japan just to become dictators. Far from it. *Sanctuary*, though fictional, deals with the cozy connection between mobsters and top politicians that has been laid bare in recent real-life scandals in Japan. Asami and Hojo believe that in order to wake up the Japanese people,

Asami turned to politics to usurp power.

they have to destroy the status quo from within, by any means necessary.

Of all the manga artists published in the United States, *Sanctuary* artist Ryoichi Ikegami (*Crying Freeman*) is probably the most realistic and least "cartoony" in his style of drawing characters—an artist who follows American comics, most particularly the work of artist Neal Adams, whose work he collects and whom he finally got to meet at the 1995 San Diego Comic Con, where Ikegami was a guest of honor. "Realistic" though he may be, Ikegami, as with many American superhero artists, admits that his readers expect from his style a sense of "manly romance" and hence, he populates his titles with "good-looking, powerful men and beautiful, sexy women."

Viz Comics' Annette Roman, co-editor on *Sanctuary*, admires its very complex story, but sees as the ultimate engine of that story the "terribly sad and moving relationship between Asami and Hojo," whose loyalty to each other was forged in the hell of their youth. Editor-in-Chief Satoru Fujii, who made much of the decision to have Viz bring over *Sanctuary*, is a native-born Japanese, and commented on how the series made some Japanese think about how "politics is always something handed down to them from above, rather than something they take control of themselves."

But what about making American readers think about their *own* system? Most of the fantasy- and SF-oriented manga titles that get brought over to the United States. have little to do with contemporary reality. *Sanctuary*, a cross between *Hard Boiled* and "City Hall," a fictional mix of bullets and ballots, may be a cool crash course for U.S. readers in the major social issues facing Japan today, but the truth is that *Sanctuary* has plenty to teach us about ourselves as well. "Until recently, Japan had no concept of grass-roots democracy the way Americans do," says Fujii.

But, as *Sanctuary* shows us, democracy is something that shouldn't be taken lightly. As politician Asami berates the crowd in *Sanctuary*, "It's about time you all recognized things for what they are! An election is not a battle among *candidates*! It's *your* battle! And your weapon is your vote! It's *your* weapon that will make this country live or die!" And by Asami and Hojo's actions, democracy demonstrates that the heroes have to be every one of us. W

Carl Horn is the weapon that will make this country live or die.

F.Y.I.

Sanctuary began publication from Viz Comics in March 1992 in square-bound format, but—as was happening with other U.S. manga titles at that time—soon switched to staples, in this case after the third issue. In total, there were 44 issues of *Sanctuary*, in five separate story arc volumes, varying between $4.95 and $2.95, depending on page count. The best way to get the story may be the *Sanctuary* graphic novels, which are over 300 pages and cost either $16.95 or $17.95. The eighth graphic novel collection is out in July and the ninth and final graphic novel will be out in September. The violence and sexual situations of *Sanctuary* make it a mature-readers title.

ANIME PICK OF THE MONTH

Crusher Joe: The Movie

(AnimEigo, dubbed VHS/subtitled VHS/subtitled LD, 125 mins., $29.95/34.95/59.95, now available)

They don't make star-spanning, swashbuckling, two-hour-plus anime adventure films like "Crusher Joe" any more; they certainly don't make them in live-action, either, which is why it's kind of appropriate that this 1983 Japanese classic has been released in America in the shadow of the special edition of the Star Wars Trilogy. But don't mistake "Crusher Joe" for some cosmic clash of good versus evil with cute furry aliens; it's more like the Schwarzenegger film "Raw Deal" in the 22nd century. The "Crushers" are an interstellar troubleshooting agency operating for cash. When Crusher Joe and his team are hired to lift a cryogenically frozen girl off-world, their "cargo" is heisted in the midst of a hyperspace jump, and they find themselves suspended from the Crushers' union—plus accused of piracy by the future Feds. Ripped off and reputation damaged, all Joe wants is a little revenge, and the trail leads to the biggest crook in the Galaxy whose secret technological toy just might be the ultimate weapon. "Crusher Joe" gives you the complete package: high-speed truck jacking, an epic bar fight, air-to-air combat, a commando raid on a heavily-fortified island, rubber-sap conversations, a Gatling-gun cyborg arm and even the first-ever appearance of the "Dirty Pair" during a drive-in movie!

MANGA PICKS OF THE MONTH

Must-read manga books shipping in August

Drakuun: The Revenge of Gustav #1 (of 6)

Dark Horse Comics

When writer/artist Johji Manabe starts a new story arc, he means that blazing arc from the sword of the scantily-clad blond bombshell, dragon princess Karula! In round two of the *Drakuun* chronicles, she's back to cut a bloody swath through the invaders of the Bosvanian empire in this sprawling saga of technomagical warfare amongst the distant stars. Bad girls, manga style!

Eat-Man #1

Viz Comics

This action-packed, post-apocalyptic fantasy features a hero with a truly bizarre superpower. When Bolt Crank, code-named "Eat-Man," literally eats a weapon, he can transform the flesh of his arm into the weapon he just consumed! One of a team of mercenaries with other incredible powers and fantastic talents, Bolt's unique ability and cool charisma attract only the very cutest sweet young things...*Eat-Man*'s sharp artwork and strange stories are both provided by Akihito Yoshitomi.

Gunsmith Cats: Misfire

Dark Horse Comics

This trade paperback collects the original *GSC* story arc #7-#10 plus *GSC: Return of Gray* #1-#3. Four-foot-nine (and 1/2 inches) mad bomber Minnie May is a little worried about her boyfriend and big-boom tutor, Ken Taki. His hands ain't so steady no more, and he wants out of the mob. Can Minnie and her bounty hunter gal pal Rally Vincent help Ken to retire in one piece, especially with hit man Gray on their trail, who's a little miffed over losing a piece of his own to Rally?

Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind Perfect Collection #4

Viz Comics

This 272-page collection completes one of the most powerful epics in the history of manga, written and drawn by the most successful producer/director in the history of anime, Hayao Miyazaki (*My Neighbor Totoro*). One thousand years after the bio-war known as the Seven Days of Fire destroyed the old world, the squabbling last remnants of mankind are on the verge of extinction in the midst of a monstrous new ecological order. This is the hour of Nausicaä, the empathic princess of the tiny Valley of Wind. A scientist forced to become a soldier to some, a savior to others, Nausicaä will hold the life or death of humanity in her hands!

Plastic Little #1

CPM Manga

You've seen the anime from A.D.V. Films; now check out the all-new manga series of *Plastic Little*, written and drawn by anime designer Satoshi Urushihara (*Chirality*)! The curvaceous cutie Captain Tita pilots the far-future submersible *Cha Cha Maru*, hunting creatures for the exotic pet market. With only four years' experience under her belt, can Tita capture an elusive cloud whale and fulfill a vow to her dead father, or is she literally out of her depth this time?

The Two Faces of Tomorrow #1 (of 13)

Dark Horse Comics

This manga, adapted from the acclaimed novel of the same name by James P. Hogan, is a dream come true for any comics fan who longs for a true "hard sci-fi" story. *Two Faces* involves the fateful test of the trustworthiness of the computers increasingly entrusted with running human civilization. Arm one computer with a few weapons, and then send in a human team to fight it...and then find it fighting the entire human race. Often considered one of the best "man vs. computer" stories ever written, *Two Faces* combines provocative ideas with a thriller plot. Highest recommendation!

By Joyce M. Steel

Spawning Movie Cards in August

Like death and destruction in your trading cards? Try *Spawn: The Movie* cards, based on...you guessed it—"Spawn" the movie that also hits this August! The 81-card set is from Inkworks, and showcases Todd McFarlane's hellish creation in still-action images, dozens of which are unavailable anywhere else. Violator, Clown, Angela and a few other supporting characters also appear in the set, which offers nine foil-etched character cards (one card for every nine packs or 1:9), three glow-in-the-dark cards (1:24) and a mysterious "Devil's Own" card (1:108). In addition, McFarlane will randomly autograph cards throughout the series (eight cards per pack, suggested retail price $1.79).

CASTING CHAOS

Krome Productions sizzles this month with its *Cast of Chaos* collector cards, a 90-card series full of *Catwoman* artist Jim Balent's art. Not only does this set have all the classic Chaos! Comics characters, but it'll actually introduce a few new characters to the Chaos! Universe as well! And although details are still sketchy, six state-of-the-art chase cards will be included (six cards per pack, suggested retail $2.50).

MIGHTY 'HERCULES'

In conjunction with the "Hercules" movie currently playing in theaters nationwide, Fleer shows its muscle with the 70-card series based on Disney's 35th animated flick. Featuring 27 story cards, 10-pop-out action cards, 10-color-in puzzle cards, six sticker fun cards and two mini-magazines, the set is chased with four gold foil embossed Coin Cards (1:9) and two Sculpted Holograms (1:24) (nine cards per pack, suggested retail $1.49).

ALIENS VS. PREDATOR

On the collectible card game (CCG) scene, yet another movie has "spawned" a card set. This time, HarperPrism—the New York book publishing house that distributed *Magic: The Gathering* and published tie-in novels and player's guides—promises a cool game based on the two Predator movies and the four Aliens films—including the upcoming "Aliens Resurrection" flick coming out this fall. There are three separate starter decks (60 cards, suggested retail $8.95 each) and booster packs (15 cards, suggested retail $2.95).

TRIBUTE TO BEEKMAN

Highlighting Doug Beekman's artistic influence over the past 20 years, Comic Images pays homage to the talented artist with a 72-card set. Images range from Doug's work on *Conan the Barbarian* to *Batman: Shadow of the Bat*. Chase cards include six OmniChrome Cards (1:12) and 500 randomly inserted autographed cards. (eight cards per pack, suggested retail $1.69).

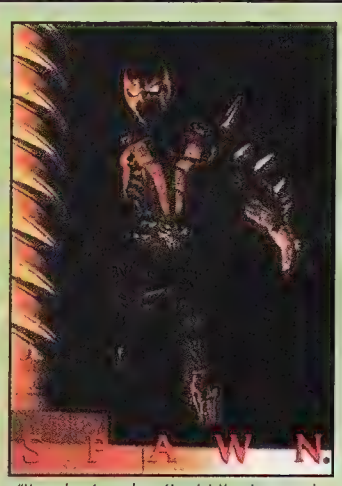
WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?

Next up is Dart Flipcards, with a release that's more than 55 years late! The company has secured a dozen "Lone Ranger" images from the 1940 Gum Inc. series which were never released! The 12 cards, drawn by renowned '40s artists Charles Steinbacher and Edwin Prittie, will finally be released as a 12-card subset and numbered 49-60, so they can be added to the original 1940 set. Just 2,600 numbered sets are available; no established suggested retail price was available at press time.

WILDSTORM LINGERIE

Time warpin' back to the 1990s, WildStorm wraps this month up with a box full o' beauties. The *WildStorm Lingerie Collection* features the company's most fetching female characters in scanty duds, drawn by folks like Adam Warren, Scott Williams and others (50 card set, suggested retail $19.99). Also from WildStorm, its *Premium Signature* series of single card releases begins this month with Voodoo & Zealot by Jim Lee. There's only 500 of these cards up for grabs, all of 'em individually signed, selling for $49.99 each! Additional cards will be released one per month for the next eight months, making nine cards in all. W

Joyce Steel does not wear lingerie, so don't even think about it.



"Hey...there's a sale at Macy's! Now I can get that tube-top I've always wanted!"
Inkworks' *Spawn: The Movie* set

"Whew, I'm gassy!"
HarperPrism's *Aliens/Predator* CCG

"Hey, sailor. For $50 we can make you the meat in a silicone sammich."
WildStorm's Premium Signature set

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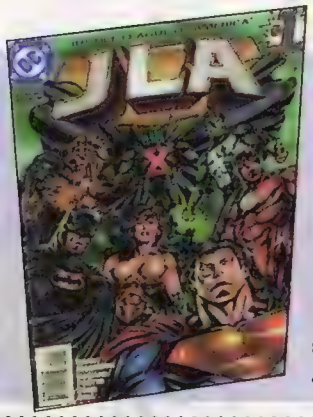
***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are the back issues searching the charts in July.**

TOP 10 COMICS



1. JLA #1

WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

DC's new *JLA* series is pretty good in darned near all respects, save one: The title. It ain't called "Justice League of America" anymore. It's just plain ol' "JLA." And there's no explanation as to what "JLA" means ('cept on the occasional cover—but who looks at *that?*). Heck, those letters could stand for anything. Jello Lobbyists on Acid? Jumpin' Leapfrogs in Action? Jolly Lepers of Armenia? Guess they figure all them long john-types on the cover will let people know that it's a superhero book, and a plenty-swell one at that. And with a high-powered lineup that includes Superman, Batman and Aquaman, they could call it *Crap on a Stick* and it would still sell. **LAST MONTH: 1**

2. THE DARKNESS #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri and Batt

About the only thing in America more popular than *The Darkness* these days is food. And the only reason that food rates ahead of *The Darkness* is that people realize they'll die if they don't eat. Hey, speaking of death, that's what our title character, Mr. Jackie Estacado, specializes in. Y'see, he started out as a mob enforcer. And now that he's down with this "Darkness" power, he can summon up li'l demon guys to fold, spindle and mutilate whoever he wants whenever he wants. This little shtick has proven so popular that all three cover versions of *The Darkness* #1 are selling better than plaid pants at a golf show. **LAST MONTH: 4**

3. WITCHBLADE #1

WRITERS: David Wohl, Brian Haberlin and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Michael Turner and D-Tron

And then there's *Witchblade*. According to our latest poll results, the only things more popular than *Witchblade* today are *The Darkness*, food and a nice pair of warm socks when they just come fresh from the dryer. Fans dig the detailed Michael Turner artwork, the heroism of the main character, Sara Pezzini, and especially the weird relationship that exists between the Witchblade itself and the Darkness force. And since *Witchblade* and *The Darkness* will be crossing over this fall, we'll probably learn a bit more about that interesting relationship. **LAST MONTH: 2**

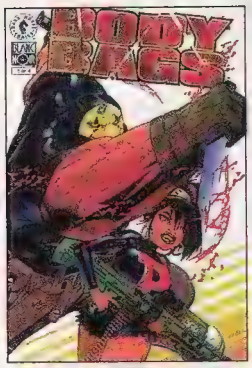
NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. DARKCHYLDE #1

WRITER: Randy Queen
ARTISTS: Randy Queen, Jason Gorder and Marlo Alquiza

Yeah, it's *Darkchylde* #1 here yet again, but at least this time you're seeing a new cover. Why? Well, *Darkchylde* #1 came with five different covers, so it makes sense that we change things up and show you something new. Also, Darkchylde creator Randy Queen himself offered to "dance the schmeggenhimey dance naked throughout the halls" of our office if we showed a different cover. Now we're not sure what the "schmeggenhimey dance" is, but it sure sounds cool. We'll have pictures next month. **LAST MONTH: 3**



NUMBER FIVE

5. BODY BAGS #1

WRITER: Jason Pearson
ARTIST: Jason Pearson

The main characters in *Body Bags* are named—no kidding—Panda and Clownface. Aw, ain't that cute? Widdle ol' Panda. Funny little Clownface. Well, not exactly. This book appears on this list for two reasons: First, no one ordered it in any kind of quantity, so we think there's maybe somewhere 'round 53 copies floating around. Second, Panda and Clownface are the kind of hyper-violent characters in the kind of hyper-violent story that appeals to...uh...hyper-violent readers, we guess. This title took everyone by surprise. **LAST MONTH: 9**

6. THE DARKNESS #0

WRITERS: David Wohl and Christina Z.
ARTISTS: Marc Silvestri, Michael Turner, D-Tron and Batt

Don't panic! Your "Top 10" list is not broken! The heading says *The Darkness #0*, but this book is really the *Witchblade #10* you've come to know and love. Y'see, 25 percent of the print run of *Witchblade #10* came with a spiffy "*Darkness #0*" alternate cover. And nobody but nobody ever walks into a store and says, "Hey! Gimme a *Witchblade #10* 'Darkness' variant!" They all say, "Hey! Gimme a *Darkness #0*!" So that's what we're callin' it from now on. That's where it is in the price guide, too. Check it out. **LAST MONTH: 8**

NUMBER SIX

NUMBER SEVEN

7. JLA #2

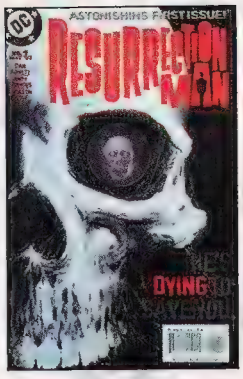
WRITER: Grant Morrison
ARTISTS: Howard Porter and John Dell

Forget our analysis of *JLA #2*. Let's find out what penciler Howard Porter has to say. Take it away, Howie... "I'm a big fan of *JLA #2*, 'cause I got paid for it. I also like it 'cause when it shows on your 'Top 10,' I get to see my name in print. *JLA* has momentum. It's a runaway bus like that bus in the movie 'Speed,' only it doesn't have Sandra Bullock in it. But we've got Wonder Woman, and she could beat up Sandra Bullock any day." **LAST MONTH: 5**

8. RESURRECTION MAN #1

WRITERS: Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning
ARTIST: Butch Guice

And now for something completely different! *Resurrection Man* is the story of a memory-stripped drifter named Mitch (he doesn't even know his last name) who has the ability to come back from the dead with a new superpower each time he dies. And he dies a lot. The catch? He never knows what his new power is gonna be, and sometimes never finds out until it's too late. He also comes back with a few shards of memory from his past life each time he's resurrected. Trust us: It's mighty good. **LAST MONTH: 16**



NUMBER EIGHT

NUMBER NINE

9. THUNDERBOLTS #1

WRITER: Kurt Busiek
ARTISTS: Mark Bagley and Vince Russell

Man, them Thunderbolts! They sure are some sneaky bastards! By the time you get to the end of *Thunderbolts #1* (and if you haven't read this book by now, you should be slapped), you find out that the heroic-lookin' T-Bolts are *really* the bad-ass Masters of Evil in disguise! They say they're here to fill the gap left by the heroes that disappeared in the battle with Onslaught. But now, those heroes are returning. Gonna be some fireworks in the Marvel Universe soon? Bet on it. **LAST MONTH: NOT RANKED**

10. PREACHER #1

WRITER: Garth Ennis
ARTIST: Steve Dillon

Looks like *Preacher* leads the comic world in the "Rudeness Most Foul" category. At various times, *Preacher* has featured guys getting their ears shot off, a woman getting her hand stabbed into a car dashboard, and a kitty-cat getting flushed down the toilet. The *really* weird thing about all this is that despite occasional over-the-top violence, *Preacher* ain't just a blood-'n'-guts shock book; it's actually one of the best-written comics available. That's why *Preacher #1* is still one of the most sought-after back issues today. **LAST MONTH: 10**

NUMBER TEN

THE NEXT TEN

THE NEXT 10 HOT BOOKS AND THE COMPANIES THAT MAKE THEM

11. FANTASTIC FOUR #1 MARVEL
12. WITCHBLADE #2 IMAGE
13. ARCANUM #1 IMAGE
14. SUPERGIRL #1 DC
15. WITCHBLADE #3 IMAGE
16. DARKCHYLDE #3 MAXIMUM
17. HITMAN #1 DC
18. ASTRO CITY (VOL. 2) #1 IMAGE
19. KA-ZAR #1 MARVEL
20. ASTRO CITY (VOL. 2) #6 IMAGE

MARKET WATCH

COMIC MARKET NEWS AND SUCH · by Lars Pearson

FANS BOOGIE DOWN FOR '70s BOOKS

DISCO AIN'T DEAD: Fans are jumping for 1970s gems.

And you thought they died with disco. In the last few months, 1970s comics have been bigger on the back-issue market than toilet paper in Russia. Why? Mostly because they're cheap! In fact, '70s back-issue prices are often cheaper than brand-spankin'-new comics' cover prices. And today's collectors often want '70s books for reasons beyond just the price tags. Reasons like:

• Oodles of key first appearances. Even if you can't afford *Incredible Hulk* #181 (first Wolverine) or *Amazing Spider-Man* #129 (first Punisher), snagging a *Ms. Marvel* #18 (first Mystique, a current X-Factor member) is still pretty keen.

• Cool obscure stuff. Long before the days of Vertigo, '70s Marvel comics like *Werewolf by Night* and *Tomb of Dracula* set a comic book horror standard. DC's recent *House of Secrets* and *Weird War Tales* series have sparked interest in their '70s counterparts. Most all these titles can be had dirt-cheap and can make for some good, offbeat reading.

• Big-time Marvel characters, much cheaper than modern titles. Books such as *Marvel Premiere*, *Marvel Two-in-One* and *Marvel Team-Up* feature tons of great Marvel A-list characters like Spider-Man, the Thing and the Hulk, and can usually be picked up at *el cheapo* rates.

• Regrettably, there's always the speculators. Some collectors think '70s comics are the next to take off in price, since '60s titles are already pricey and there's mountains of '80s and '90s books floating around.

Higher levels of trading haven't resulted in many higher prices yet, so there are still groovy bargains to be found—if you can stand the disco references.

RESURRECTION MAN SHOWS LIFE!

Whoa, where'd *this* baby come from? *Resurrection Man*, the new DC title about Mitch Shelley, a schmoe who is reborn with new superpowers every time he croaks, has been trading hands fast and furious. Issue #1 has already gone into a second printing, and first printings can easily cost you twice-cover, even though the book is only six months old.

That's *waaay* atypical for a second-tier DC book, but *Resurrection Man*, co-written by Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning and drawn by Butch Guice, has been appealing to a wide range of comic readers. The Vertigo crowd digs the funky resurrection element, and superhero fans are clam-happy since Mitch gets a brand-new power each time he bites it. A guest appearance by the JLA in issue #2 didn't exactly hurt the title's visibility—and neither will future stories involving Batman and Hitman.

Readers also like the fact that *Resurrection Man* has the same sense of loss that helped make *Spawn* popular, since it was just revealed that Mitch's wife helped kill him originally and still wants him axed.

Hmm, maybe it *does* pay to bite it.

***Resurrection Man* is DC's new sleeper hit.**

***Batman: Black and White*'s creative lineup is so good, Alex Ross' art (above) only got the *inside* cover!**

WHAT'S HOT

• *Batman: Black and White* (DC)—Neil Gaiman! Jim Lee! Frank Miller! Marc Silvestri! Simon Bisley! This harmless-looking four-issue anthology mini-series has so much big-name work, a piece by fan-fave painter Alex Ross is shoved onto the *inside* cover of #4! Fans finally realized there's something here for everyone, so *Batman: Black and White* issues are being grabbed faster than Eggo waffles. And truth be told, if you can't find a comic creator you like among the 40 or so that worked on this puppy, you're probably blind. And have bad taste. And...and like Pauly Shore.

• *Captain America* (Marvel)—No big surprise here. Ever since the announcement that the acclaimed team of Mark Waid and Ron Garney was returning to *Cap*, there's been high demand for their first run: *Captain America* #444-#454. If Waid writes new *Cap* stories as if he were continuing from these issues, demand could go even higher.

• *The Invisibles* vol. 2 (DC/Vertigo)—Thanks to writer Grant Morrison's work on *JLA* and Phil Jimenez's crisp artwork, Morrison's little creator-owned psychodrama has gained on the sales charts over the last few months. **W**

New York-based Lars Pearson is Wizard's price guide manager.

Wizard's Top 10 Writers

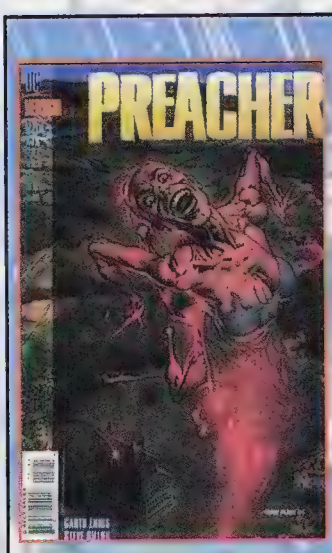
1. Garth Ennis — *Hitman, Preacher*
2. Mark Waid — *Ka-Zar, Flash* (Paul Schiraldi)
3. Peter David — *Aquaman, Supergirl* (Al Ortega)
4. Scott Lobdell — *Uncanny X-Men* (J. Schuyler)
5. Kurt Busiek — *Astro City, Thunderbolts* (Al Ortega)
6. Grant Morrison — *JLA* (Bobo Martin)
7. Frank Miller — *Sin City* (Al Ortega)
8. David Wohl — *Witchblade* (Al Ortega)
9. James Robinson — *Starman, Cable*
10. Joe Kelly — *Deadpool, upcoming: Uncanny X-Men* (Al Ortega)

Wizard's Top 10 Artists*

1. Joe Madureira — *Uncanny X-Men* (Gabe Palacio)
2. Jim Lee — *Fantastic Four* (Al Ortega)
3. Michael Turner — *Witchblade*
4. Marc Silvestri — *The Darkness*
5. J. Scott Campbell — *Gen13* (Al Ortega)
6. Carlos Pacheco — *X-Men*
7. Adam Kubert — *Incredible Hulk* (Al Ortega)
8. Andy Kubert — *Ka-Zar* (C. Blankenhorn)
9. Joe Quesada — *Ash*
10. Alex Ross — *Uncle Sam*

*** Pencilers and painters**

***Wizard*'s Top Ten Professionals lists are derived from a nationwide retailer survey.**



Buried Treasure

Preacher #12 (polybagged)

Though the market value of *Preacher* might have slowed in recent months (most likely due to trade paperback reprints), the series is still a hot commodity. In fact, fans seem to have overlooked one thing: polybagged issues of *Preacher* #12.

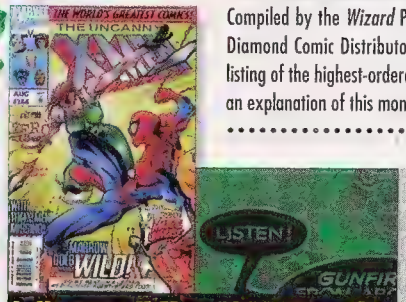
See, in 1996 some Vertigo books were polybagged with a 16-page ad for the computer game *Loaded*. But a lot of readers ripped open the polybag, read the book and chucked the promo—making these babies kinda scarce.

And because *Preacher* is still a prize series, fanatics will want both bagged and unbagged versions. So if you're a "complete" *Preacher* fan, snag a bagged copy for your collection today! ■ *LP*

WIZARD TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of JUNE.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by Diamond Comic Distributors book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for June. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's standout books.



1. Uncanny X-Men #346 (Marvel)
2. X-Men #66 (Marvel)
3. Fantastic Four #10 (Marvel)
4. Wolverine #115 (Marvel)
5. Spawn #63 (Image)
6. Iron Man #10 (Marvel)
7. Avengers #9 (Marvel)
8. Captain America #10 (Marvel)
9. WildC.A.T.s/X-Men: The Silver Age #1 (Image)
10. Generation X #29 (Marvel)
11. JLA #8 (DC)
12. Curse of the Spawn #10 (Image)
13. X-Man #29 (Marvel)
14. Gen13 #20 (Image)
15. X-Force #68 (Marvel)
16. The Darkness #6 (Image)
17. Cable #45 (Marvel)
18. Witchblade #15 (Image)
19. X-Factor #136 (Marvel)
20. Incredible Hulk #455 (Marvel)
21. Amazing Spider-Man #425 (Marvel)
22. Alpha Flight #1 (Marvel)
23. Excalibur #111 (Marvel)
24. Psylocke & Angel: Crimson Dawn #1 (Marvel)
25. Superman #126 (DC)
26. Adventures of Superman #549 (DC)
27. Action Comics #736 (DC)
28. Superman: The Man of Steel #70 (DC)
29. Peter Parker: Spider-Man #82 (Marvel)
30. Spectacular Spider-Man #248 (Marvel)
31. Sensational Spider-Man #18 (Marvel)
32. Deadpool #7 (Marvel)
33. Batman #545 (DC)
34. Dawn #6 (Sirius)
35. Detective Comics #712 (DC)
36. Batman: The Long Halloween #9 (DC)
37. Gen13 Bootleg #8 (Image)
38. Star Wars: Dark Force Rising #2 (D.H.)
39. Supergirl #12 (DC)
40. Gen13 College Yearbook 1997 (Image)
41. Lady Death: The Crucible #5 (Chaos!)
42. The X-Files #31 (Topps)
43. Green Lantern #89 (DC)
44. Superman: The Man of Steel Annual #6 (DC)
45. Thunderbolts #5 (Marvel)
46. The Superman/Madman Hullabaloo! #1 (D.H.)
47. The Kents #1 (DC)
48. S. Wars: T. of the Jedi—Fall of the Sith Empire #1 (D.H.)
49. Preacher #28 (DC)
50. Pitt #14 (Full Bleed)
51. Kurt Busiek's Astro City (vol. 2) #10 (Image)
52. Nine Volt #1 (Image)
53. WildC.A.T.s #39 (Image)
54. Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #97 (DC)
55. Spider-Man Unlimited #17 (Marvel)
56. Ka-Zar #4 (Marvel)
57. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #65 (DC)
58. Preacher Special: The Good Old Boys (DC)
59. Nightwing #11 (DC)
60. DV8 #9 (Image)
61. Detective Comics Annual #10 (DC)
62. The Flash #128 (DC)
63. Arcanum #4 (Image)
64. Thunderbolts '97 (Marvel)
65. Elektra #9 (Marvel)
66. Catwoman #48 (DC)
67. Robin #44 (DC)
68. Silver Surfer #130 (Marvel)
69. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #23 (Marvel)
70. Wonder Woman #124 (DC)
71. Daydreamers #1 (Marvel)
72. Vampirella/WetWorks #1 (Harris)
73. Robin Annual #6 (DC)
74. S. Wars: X-Wing R. S.—Req. for a Rogue #3 (D.H.)
75. Daredevil #366 (Marvel)
76. Venom: License to Kill #3 (Marvel)
77. Starman #33 (DC)
78. Azrael #32 (DC)
79. WildStorm Swimsuit Special '97 #1 (Image)
80. Journey into Mystery #511 (Marvel)
81. Aquaman #35 (DC)
82. Hellshock #6 (Image)
83. Impulse #28 (DC)
84. The Teen Titans #11 (DC)
85. The Dreaming #15 (DC)
86. What If? #99 (Marvel)
87. WetWorks #30 (Image)
88. Pride & Joy #2 (DC)
89. Superboy #42 (DC)
90. Hitman #17 (DC)
91. Judgment Day Omega (Maximum)
92. Savage Dragon #40 (Image)
93. Judgment Day: Final Judgment (Maximum)
94. Hellboy: Almost Colossus #1 (Dark Horse)
95. Weird War Tales #3 (DC)
96. The Books of Magic #39 (DC)
97. Superboy Annual #4 (DC)
98. Legion of Super-Heroes #95 (DC)
99. Legionnaires #51 (DC)
100. Lynch #1 (Image)

X-MEN BACK ON TOP

• ***Uncanny X-Men* #346** (No. 1), ***X-Men* #66** (No. 2) and ***Spawn* #63** (No. 5): Last month, sales of *Spawn* were up due to a deal through which retailers got a free "Cosmic Angela Ultra-Action Figure" if they ordered buttloads of *Spawn* comics. This month, *Spawn* sales returned to normal, and schwing!—*Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men* have retaken their slots at the top.

• ***Alpha Flight* #1** (No. 22): Whoa! For a team that looked dead in the water, Alpha Flight is making a comeback as strong as the woolly Sasquatch himself. Writer Steven T. Seagle (*Sandman Mystery Theatre*) and artist Scott Clark (*StormWatch*) seem to have drawn some fans from their old titles to this new series.

• ***Nine Volt* #1** (No. 52): Moooo! Little has been said about this new Top Cow series, but since Top Cow's one of the hottest companies going right now, *Nine Volt* #1 debuted high. It's too soon to tell, though, whether Top Cow has another hit with this futuristic series, described by its penciler Anthony Chun as "X-Files" meets Japanese monster movies.

• ***Preacher Special: The Good Old Boys*** (No. 58): Man, *Preacher* is going strong! Specials and annuals often place much lower than issues from a regular series, since they usually don't add to the regular series' continuity. But *Good Old Boys* has beaten this trend, placing a mere nine slots below *Preacher*, even with an eye-popping $4.95 price tag (twice the standard *Preacher* price). That's a big financial winner for DC Comics. People sure love that Garth Ennis guy.

• ***Starman* #33** (No. 77): Great galaxies! *Starman* is flying up the charts! This series, featuring the son of the Golden Age *Starman*, went up a whopping 15 notches from last month, and the title's been adding readers ever since DC gave it a big marketing push with "Starman Month" in February.

• ***Judgment Day Omega*** (No. 91) and ***Judgment Day: Final Judgment*** (No. 93). Good news for Maximum Press (now known as Awesome Entertainment): Two more of the company's books cracked the Top 100. Bad news: Numbers were down fairly significantly from May's *Judgment Day Alpha*. But more good news: *Alpha* is already in a second printing, as people snapped up available copies. We'll see what happens with this one.

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misc

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comic book intelligence quotient

Former Mort of the Month Bat Lash welcomes you to the Miscellaneous *Wizard* Fun Section

The flick "Batman & Robin" was one of the most embarrassing abominations ever to be regurgitated onto the screen. Or maybe it's just us. Either way, we'll be grading your comic knowledge this month against some of the more memorable scenes from that flick. The higher your score, the more ass the scene sucked. Ready?

Score	Rank
0-4	The dynamic duo click their heels together and POW!, blades pop out of their boots. Then they ice-skate around, play hockey with Mr. Freeze's goons and Robin yells, "It's a hockey team from Hell!"
5-14	Robin, wrestling with Poison Ivy's plants, breaks the surface of the water, but is dragged back beneath the surface…BY REVERSING THE FILM!!
15-19	If you were to edit out Elle Macpherson, Alicia Silverstone, Uma Thurman and that fat guy who played Bane, the "plot" of the movie would be minimally affected. Not a good sign.
20	Alfred didn't die.

1. Who was killed by the gamma bomb explosion that turned mild-mannered milksop Bruce Banner into the Hulk?
A) Soviet Agent Igor Starsky
B) The Gremlin
C) Rick Jones' buddy, Slappy Carson
D) Ironically, the Hulk's future persona, the Maestro, ventured into the past and was killed by the same gamma explosion that originally turned him into the Hulk.

2. When that rat-bastard, the Clown, kidnapped poor little Cyan, what snack did he offer the girl before Spawn came in to put the kibosh on him?
A) a gingerbread man made of "soulstuff"
B) a dead fried rat on a stick (just like the ones at the State Fair)
C) poison mixed with regurgitated bugs and maggots
D) Easy Cheese and crackers

3. When Clint Barton, a.k.a. Hawkeye, ran away and joined a traveling carnival, for which evil, greasy carny did he become an apprentice?
A) the Ringmaster
B) Bullseye
C) Swordsman
D) Miguel, the runny-stooled squirrel monkey

4. Batman recently fought a postal worker who actually went postal and started murdering people. What did the killer kook call himself?
A) Faceless
B) Namegame
C) Postage Due
D) Postal

5. Y'know that cartoon "The Tick"? Well, what's the big blue galoot's battle cry?
A) "Bite this, evildoers!"
B) "Spoon!"
C) "Assume the position!"
D) "Justice!"

6. From where did the X-Men's Rogue get her superstrength and ability to fly?
A) She absorbed the powers from Ms. Marvel.
B) She inhaled radioactive gas released from some funky-looking meteor.
C) When she emerged from the Siege Perilous, she absorbed these powers.
D) She's a mutant, dammit—she was born with these powers! Duh!

7. How often did the Silver Age Green Lantern, Hal Jordan, have to recharge that crappy old power ring of his?
A) after an hour's use of the ring
B) every 24 hours
C) every time it was exposed to the color yellow
D) whenever the writer was hard-up for a plot device

8. When Spidey first fought the wily Sandman, how did he defeat him?
A) He tricked the Sandman into entering an incinerator, and the heat turned him into inanimate glass.
B) Spidey used a giant high-powered fan to scatter the Sandman's sand particles so he was unable to reform.
C) Spidey knocked him into a cement mixer, causing his sand particles to mix with the fast-drying cement, thus imprisoning him in the form of a cement likeness of himself.
D) When the villain turned into sand, Spidey, being the neat freak that he is, simply vacuumed him up.

9. What was the name of the small company that the booze-hound, Tony Stark, started after Obadiah Stane took over Stark International?
A) Silicon Sevices
B) Power Inc.
C) Circuits Maximus
D) Liquor & Mousepads, Ltd.

10. Before Greer Nelson became the furry Tigra, she was the super-chick known as…
A) Black Cat.
B) Hellcat.
C) White Cat.
D) The Cat.

11. Which Golden Age grampa taught a young Bruce Wayne the finer points of pugilism?
A) Wildcat
B) The Atom
C) Guardian
D) The Red Bee

12. Which member of the 22 Brides is actually a flaming transvestite?
A) Frenchie
B) Hardkiss
C) Marilyn
D) Lulu Stump

13. In the Elseworlds mini-series *Thrillkiller*, how does Batgirl's boytoy, Robin, die?
A) He dies in an explosive trap set by the Joker.
B) The Joker ties him down near several giant fire ant hills and coats him with honey, then allows the ants to do their work.
C) The Joker French-kisses Robin, depositing a poison in his mouth, which causes the hero's death.
D) Crabs.

14. What super-planet is the home of the Legion of Super-Heroes' M'onel?
A) Krypton
B) Daxam
C) Earth
D) Tor'el

15. Which cool '70s TV cop was Sara Pezzini, a.k.a. Witchblade, enamored with as a child?
A) Columbo
B) Starsky
C) Baretta
D) Kojak

16. Who is responsible for turning the X-Men's Angel into a blue-skinned, razor-feathered freak?
A) Mr. Sinister
B) Apocalypse
C) Cameron Hodge
D) Bill Nye the Science Guy

17. This freakish Kandor City resident has become a Metropolis hero:
A) Tolos.
B) Scorn.
C) Kara Zor-El.
D) Sentinel.

18. Who did Darkchylde kill upon receiving her powers?
A) her ex-boyfriend, who cheated on her
B) her father, who tried to rape her
C) her best friend, who revealed her secret
D) her plastic surgeon, who left one smaller than the other

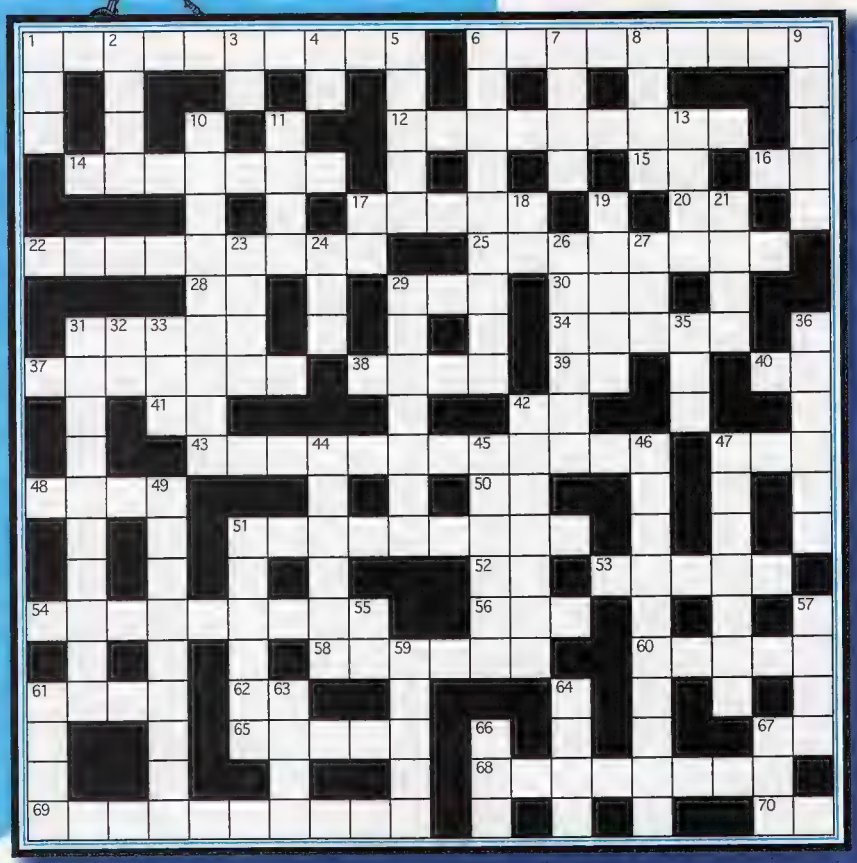
19. When the Shi'ar and Kree were at war during Operation: Galactic Storm, who was it that masterminded the destruction of the Kree's homeworld, Hala, and why?
A) The Skrulls did it in retaliation for the Kree invading their galactic empire.
B) The Shi'ar Deathbird detonated the nega-bomb to prevent the Kree from using the same weapon on the Shi'ar homeworld.
C) The Supreme Intelligence did it to jumpstart the Kree's genetic evolution.
D) A group of teenage, generation-X Kree slackers did it because they hated their parents, their Nintendos were broken and they were bored.

20. When Captain Jean-Luc Picard was turned into one of those Borg bastards, what command did he give them to halt their invasion of Federation territory?
A) "Sleep."
B) "Return home."
C) "Self-destruct."
D) "Void your bowels."

WIZARD CROSSWORD

you know, across, down, that sort of stuff

TOO TOUGH?
Don't have a cow!
The answers are on page 206.



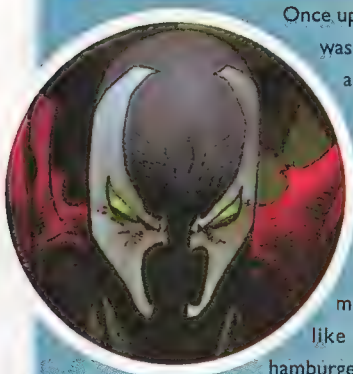
1. DC's retro-annuals theme
6. pre-Gleek heroic pet
12. Flash's girlfriend
14. Teen Titans mentor
15. revealed DC heroes' pasts; initials
16. Wanda Blake's ex-hubby
17. Mystique's son or Lightning's kid
20. Cartoon Network talk show host; init.
22. Marvel's 1997 retro-month
25. Iron Man's ray
28. inked X-Men with Byrne; init.
29. "Batman" sound effect!
30. Flash's enemy Grodd is this
31. 16 across' current identity
34. Mike Baron/Steve Rude character
37. winged JLA ally
38. ____ "The Man" Lee
39. *Warlock Chronicles* artist; init.
40. behind whole Spider-Clone mess; init.
41. *Alpha Flight: ___ the Beginning…*
42. gives Lady Death her look; init.
43. Dark Horse manga mag
47. Adam Warlock's troll friend
48. Spector or Silvestri
50. Gen[13] and Ghost artist; init.
51. Astro City vampire
52. Valiant guru; init.
53. dark Avengers doctor
54. Spider-Woman's villainous siblings
56. *The Tale of One Bad* ___
58. Ultra Boy's home planet
60. partner of Quantum or Buzz Lightyear
61. *Infinity Inc.* and Valiant artist
62. *A Distant Soil* creator; init.
65. Parnival Plunder's brother
67. *Kingdom Come*'s Roy Harper; init.
68. Moon Knight's pilot
69. one of Marvel's Sandman's aliases
70. Acclaim's Donovan

1. Beppo was a super one
2. 22 Brides member; _____ Stump
3. *Brainbanx* writer; init.
4. source of Green Lantern's power
5. Man of the Atom
6. Simon Williams
7. one of first true modern artists
8. Timewalker traveled through these
9. Green Arrow and Warlord artist
10. the first Robin
11. "Great _____!"
13. *Marvels* artist or Superman's pal
17. "died" in *Superman* #100; init.
18. *Squadron Supreme* inker Sam ___ La Rosa
19. creator of Vertigo's *The System*
21. *Fourth World* stars; New _____
23. known for saying "Exit!" or "Bomb!"
24. Savage Dragon is one
26. Vampirella's feline foe
27. Supergirl's ex-boyfriend
29. goofy interdimensional Batman fan
31. Flash's new town
32. Fairchild's alma mater; init.
33. current Robin's girlfriend
35. Kirk's ship; ____ *Enterprise*
36. Impossible Man's planet
42. Bart Allen became this
44. snake-like LSH member
45. makers of G.I. Joe
46. Image's UN-sanctioned team
47. powerful Zoo Crew member
49. Conan is this
51. creator of Captain Marvel
55. Iron Man's company; init.
57. married to the Human Torch
59. *Darkchylde* inker Alquiza
61. noise Nightcrawler makes
63. Borg Queen went bonkers for him
64. returned in *Avengers* #263
66. Mulder believes in this
67. sacrificed himself in *JLA* #1

TOP 10 HEROES & VILLAINS OF THE MONTH

This list doesn't track the number of copies which a specific character sells each month. It doesn't pay attention to any kind of sales meter. This list is a roster of the 10 comic book characters with the strongest fan following—nothing more, nothing less.

1) SPAWN

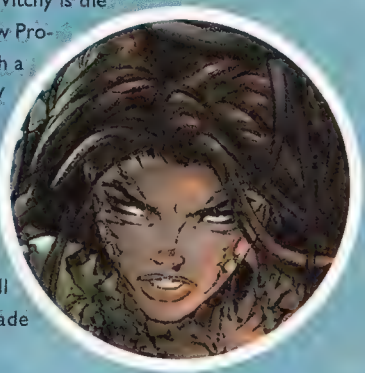


Once upon a time, Spawny-Guy was just a li'l ol' comic character. Yeah, he was adored by four-color fanboys everywhere, but that was it. Then along comes TV and movies. All of a sudden, Spawn's an overnight media sensation—kinda like Jim Carrey, but with hamburger meat for a head. Say what you will about the HBO animated series—maybe you like it, maybe you don't. Think what you will about the movie—maybe you think it's great, maybe you think it's a big pile o' horse hooey. The bottom line is they've increased Spawn's exposure, oh, by about 53,000 times.

2) WOLVERINE

Holy goosh. Wolverine may be one o' the good guys. He may fight the good fight. He may even stand up for Truth, Justice and the Canadian Way. But he's sure got a lot to learn about personal grooming. This guy's in worse need of a hot shower and some hair conditioner than anyone we've seen this side of David Lee Roth. And he could use a shave while we're at it. What's his deal? Is he afraid to get too close to his razor? You'd think that after taking on the likes of the Juggernaut and the Sentinels, Wolvie wouldn't be afraid of men's toiletries. But then again, maybe he is.

3) WITCHBLADE



That Witchblade, she's a-one saucy tomato! Actually, she's a lot better than just *one* saucy tomato. She's like a whole vegetable garden with a little bit of everything growing in it except cabbage, which is pretty darned useless. Heck, if it weren't for cole slaw, cabbage would be outlawed in like 29 states. But we digress. Witchy is the driving force at Top Cow Productions these days, with a brand-spankin' new TV series deal and an even brand-spankin' newer toy deal under her... uh...her belt, we guess. Does she even wear a belt? Kinda hard to tell under all that Witchblade armor stuff, huh?

4) SPIDER-MAN

How unfortunate. For all his heroic career, poor Peter Parker has been rather misunderstood as Spider-Man. Heck, even though he's layin' his webbed ass on the line every day for his fellow man, half the Marvel population *still* thinks he's some sorta bad guy. Who's to blame? That radioactive spider that bit him, of course! Nobody likes spiders! We're always squashing 'em and killing 'em. Now if Peter Parker were bitten by a radioactive fluffy bunny and gained the proportionate speed and strength of a bunny, it would be a whole different story. Who *couldn't* love The Amazing Bunny-Man?

5) DEADPOOL

The best thing about Deadpool? He proves that your parents were wrong. Your fourth grade teacher too. And Captain Kangaroo, while we're at it. Y'see, all these old-time sticks-in-the-mud always told you not to be a wise-ass, 'cause no one likes a smart alec. Well, Deadpool constantly runs off at the mouth and he's always rippin' on someone. And comic fans just looooove him. In fact, his popularity seems to grow just about every month. So take that, Mom! Deadpool's right!

6) BATMAN

If a hero is truly measured by the adversaries he goes up against, then Batman is one heroic sumbitch. Batman is perhaps more defined by his villains than any other hero. The Joker, the Penguin, the Riddler—we know 'em all. And the pure evilness of these villains points up the heroism personified in Batman. But then you throw in killer penguins or Joel Schumacher and the whole thing just kinda crashes and goes to Hell in a handbag.

7) THE DARKNESS

If Witchblade is the vegetable garden of Top Cow, then The Darkness is the meat 'n' potatoes. Yeah, Jackie Estacado is a real man's man, a rough-and-tumble, I-kill-guys-for-a-living *hombre*. Not the kind of fella you'd want to meet in a dark alley. Or a brightly lit alley, for that matter. But he does combine with Witchblade (which he will this fall in *The Darkness* and *Witchblade*, as they cross over) to make a formidable one-two punch for the Cow.

8) PREACHER

Jesse Custer's got the life. We've already told you he's got a sweetheart girlfriend and a drunk Irish vampire best friend, but we haven't mentioned the best part: He's in tight with John Wayne—the Duke himself! Yeah, the Duke might be dead, but that never stops him from droppin' in on Jesse with a word of advice. Now *that's* the kinda sidekick we'd like. Beats the hell out of toting around some snot-nosed little punk named "Bucky."

9) X-MAN

X-Man—or Nate Grey, as his friends call him—is the original underdog. First, he's not even a real guy; he's a clone. Second, he's not even a clone from *this* reality. No, he's gotta come from one o' them many alternate realities that dot the X-landscape. Third, his name ain't exactly what you would call...original. It's kinda derived from that *X-Men* title Marvel publishes. You might be familiar with it. Still, everyone pulls for the underdog and Nate's no exception.

10) APOCALYPSE

Apocalypse? Yeah, Apocalypse! 'Bout time we got some genuine bad-asses 'round here! And they don't get much badder than the Big A! He's so mean, he once ripped Angel's wings out and replaced 'em with metal spiky ones. And we also hear he's so mean, he always leaves the toilet seat up, just hopin' to get some dopey chick to fall in. No, he ain't a nice guy, but sometimes baddies can be pretty popular too. Once again, life imitates pro wrestling.

MORT OF THE MONTH

Now it's time to look at the lamest character of the month, or, as we like to call 'em, the Mort of the Month!

CRAZY QUILT

Love the suit.

Some artsy-fartsy painter named Quilt (one name, just like he was Madonna or something) used paintings to deliver double-secret crime instructions to his gang! One day, a rival gangster and possible art critic popped a cap in Quilt's ass. Instead of killing him, the bullet only blinded Quilt. So Quilt donned a special helmet that allowed him to see only in bright, vivid colors. He committed a series of color-related crimes (huh?), until he was finally brought to justice by...The Boy Commandos!?! Oh, no! Not those ever-rugged Boy Commandos! So he's a blind guy thrown in the clink by the Boy Commandos? Instant Morthood.

BULL PEN

Lost and Found

The first annual Wizard Staff Scavenger Hunt started at 9:00 a.m. one sunny Thursday morning, as the entire Wizard Press Bullpen (*Wizard*, *Wizard* specials, *InQuest* and *ToyFare*) broke down into teams of four, each with their own codenames, like Alpha Bravo Bravo Tango Bravo, the Danger Rangers and the Kung-Fu Fighters. Each team received a box containing a list of wacky items to get (Including a Victoria's Secret store gift certificate for $1.43, a photo of a teammate behind a fast-food counter wearing the drive-thru headset, and a quarter from 1975, which—hey, fun fact—doesn't exist!), miscellaneous items that needed to be identified (like play pieces from board games, and bizarre novelty items), riddles that needed to be solved, and a Polaroid camera, for the teams to take 10 "special" photos, including one that turned out to be highly chaotic/injury-inducing: a shot of the opposing team. After seven hours of search-and-destroy driving, the team that scored a whopping 392 points (23 points higher than the second-place team!) and took home the prizes (each member received primo reserved parking for a month, an additional paid-vacation day and dinner for two at a ritzy Japanese hibachi steakhouse) was…the Kung-Fu Fighters, comprised of *Wizard* Assistant Editor Andrew Kardon, Administrative Assistant Jennifer Cavallo, *InQuest* Editor Mike Searle and lucky new intern guy Mark Aronowitz. "I couldn't believe how willing people were to give us free stuff," commented unofficial Kung-Fu spokesman Kardon. "Even though we got kicked out of a law firm, almost got a cop fired by convincing him to let us photograph him and had to turn our clothes backwards—including our underwear (ouch)—it was actually a pretty fun day. And hey, no one got arrested."

One of the Damned

Arlene So

designer, *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*

What do you do at Wizard Press?
I basically design columns, departments, house ads and promotional stuff for *Wizard*, *InQuest* and *ToyFare*, and I make sure the other designers have stuff to do. I also take everyone's lunch money, especially Steve Blackwell's.

Your favorite sections in *Wizard*?
"Magic Words," because I get to read each month's wackiest mail firsthand, and "Bullpen," because Wizard is such a darn crazy place to work.

What surprised you the most about the Wizard offices?
Wizard is a place where people walking through the halls with their pants down is such a norm, and it doesn't bother anybody a bit. For a company as formal as Wizard, people are really casual about what they do.

Which design job are you most proud of?
In the last scene of the movie "Chasing Amy," there was a mock-up cover of *Bluntman and Chronic* that I helped design.

Most embarrassing moment in your life?
One day, the phone rang, and, thinking it was a friend of mine, I answered the phone, "Hello, sweetheart!"—but on the other end was my boss, who happened to be a guy. I was so horrified—I couldn't talk for a minute. But he loved it.

What hobbies or outside interests do you have?
I rollerblade (poorly), dog-watch—'cause they're so cute, and I want to see what kind of dog I want—and do crossword puzzles.

What's your main goal in life, and what goal have you reached?
I'd like to someday work with whales and dolphins, without ever having to go to college for it. I was able to save up money to buy my own car, named "Horace."

People would be surprised to know that…
…I was born and raised in the Phillippines until I was 16, and speak Filipino fluently.

What's your advice for graphic designers just starting out?
Smile, nod and pretend you know what you're doing. For the serious-minded, improvise.

Favorite comic right now?
Strangers in Paradise—it's not a superhero book; it's about real life, relationships and stuff.

Favorite comic book of all time?
Watchmen, because it delves into the lives of ordinary people who wanted to make a difference.

What superpower would you want, and why?
Invisibility, so I can sneak up on somebody without them knowing I'm there.

Illustration by Jim Cobby

WIZARD TOP TEN

Top 10 action figures inspired by the film "Batman & Robin"

10. Sweating Batman and fainting Robin extra-heavy rubber costume deluxe playset.
9. Alicia Silverstone in split-seam Batgirl outfit with real cake-eating action.
8. Cold Miser/Heat Miser two-pack.
7. Arnold Schwarzenegger Mr. Freeze with real-fur bear slippers, voice chip full of distractingly bad one-liners and real "My God…and I thought my career was over after 'Jingle All the Way' " facial expression.
6. Talking Bane with voice chip containing real movie dialogue like "Bomb," "Exit!" and "Stop pinching me, Mr. Schumacher."
5. Dying Alfred with overflowing bedpan action.
4. Vomiting moviegoers playset with "I don't care if it's not over, we're leaving!" and "Gimme back my $7.50!" audio-activators.
3. Butt-check Batman and rump-display Robin with "opening credits getting into costume" action.
2. Gossip Gertie with built-in M-80 so you CAN GET HER TO SHUT THE HELL UP!
1. A Nicolas Cage Superman. Hey, since Schumacher just killed the Bat-franchise, we should start thinking about Supes anyway.

CONTEST WINNERS

GRAPHITTI DESIGNS, *Wizard* #68: Zak A. Lowry, of Oklahoma City, Okla., suggested a Groo action figure (with running Rufferto)!

KA-ZAR, #68: Mindy Lee, Chula Vista, Calif.

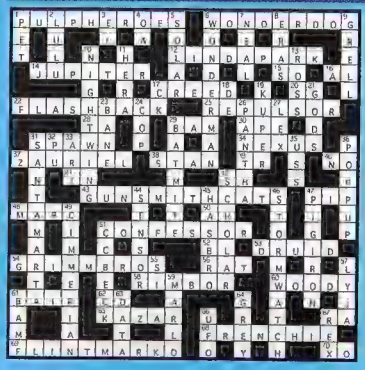
C.B.I.Q. answers...

from page 202

1. D	5. B	9. C	13. C	17. B
2. C	6. A	10. D	14. B	18. B
3. C	7. B	11. A	15. B	19. C
4. A	8. D	12. C	16. B	20. A

CROSSWORD answers...

from page 203



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WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

HOWARD MACKIE

Talk to Howard Mackie about his early days with Marvel, and he'll paint you a portrait of a kid in a candy store. "Those days at Marvel were so—I don't want to sound 'new-agey'—but they were so special and magical," says the 38-year-old writer of Marvel's *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* and *X-Factor*. "I wasn't a kid when I started at Marvel, but I felt like it at times."

Within a few hours of starting as an assistant editor at Marvel in 1984 under the late Mark Gruenwald, Mackie met John Byrne, Walt Simonson, Chris Claremont and Al Milgrom. "These were all names I had been following ever since I was a little kid. I got to work with these guys and I essentially got to learn as a professional what comic books were all about. There were no better teachers."

Comics had always been a part of Mackie's life, thanks mostly to a steady supply from his older sisters. But it was another part of his youth—a friendship with Marvel staffer Mike Carlin—that led him to a career in the industry. Carlin, newly promoted at the time to full editor, was tired of hearing Mackie complain about working as a traffic manager for an export company. So Carlin (now DC's executive editor) encouraged his friend to go after his former position as Gruenwald's assistant editor. And that was Mackie's foot in the door.

Al Ortega

His role as writer kicked off when he was told by Gruenwald to pen a fill-in story for *Iron Man* #211. What followed was a list of various and sundry Marvel products: *Power Pack* #34, *Chuck Norris and His Karate Commandos*, *Air Raiders*, *Solo Avengers* #12 and #18-#20, *Avengers Spotlight* #21-#25 and #27-#29, mini-series for Gambit and Rogue, and *Web of Spider-Man* #84-#96. He picked up *Peter Parker: Spider-Man* with #44 (when it was simply known as *Spider-Man*), and helped launch the current incarnation of *Ghost Rider*, serving as writer until #69.

Mackie says he's pleased with what's on his plate right now, including a third Gambit mini-series and *X-Factor*, which he started with #115. And then, of course, there's *Peter Parker: Spider-Man*. "It never gets boring. To me, he is still one of the more intriguing characters up at Marvel."

Despite his satisfaction, Mackie has expanded hopes for the future. He's in the early stages of learning the screenwriting ropes, and is developing two projects: a sci-fi/horror story and a smaller, quieter effort he compares in style to the works of Ray Bradbury.

"Fortunately for me and unfortunately for me, I have never had a shortage of comic book work. And I say that's fortunate because I enjoy doing it, and it certainly pays the bills. But unfortunately in that comic book work has always taken precedence for me over anything else. I've always dabbled in other things, and so I hope to expand that dabbling into something else.

"But I don't think I'd give up comics, because I really love them."

By Scott A. Aubrey

First comic read...

Probably some *Legion of Super-Heroes*. But definitely a DC book.

Favorite comic book story of all time...

"This Man, This Monster" from *Fantastic Four* #51

Favorite work of your own...

The first *Gambit* limited series. I had a lot of fun working with penciler Lee Weeks, one of the best comic book storytellers out there. My story was fully realized in the finished product.

Comics you currently read...

Every Spider-Man title and X-title, *Preacher*, *Leave It to Chance*, *Starman*, *Sin City*

Favorite comic character...

I've always liked Iron Man. Mark Gruenwald used to say, "You could not, as a young reader, aspire to be bitten by a radioactive spider." Iron Man was a guy in a suit. It could be *anyone* in that suit.

The one person you'd like to meet...

J.R.R. Tolkien, because I love *The Lord of the Rings*.

Superpower you would most want...

I've always been a fan of The Atom. I think it would be really cool to get really small.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....

Smartfood popcorn, because I'm on a severe diet.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...

As a kid, Rock'em Sock'em Robots. As an adult, it's Nintendo 64. Jeff Matsuda, the artist of *X-Factor*, got me addicted.

Favorite TV show...

"ER." It's one of the fastest-paced TV shows on right now, with absolutely the best characterization.

Last good book you read...

Underboss: Sammy the Bull Gravano's Story of Life in the Mafia, by Peter Maas. Having grown up in Brooklyn, it lends fascinating insight into a life that always existed on the periphery of my awareness.

Last good movie you saw...

"Grosse Pointe Blank." There was nothing about it I did not like. It was well-acted, had believable characters, a phenomenal pace and a cool soundtrack.

Person you would most like to work with...

I would love to collaborate with John Byrne on something. I have been his editor, but he and I have never actually worked as co-creators on something. We're friends and I love his art.

Favorite musical performers...

Black 47, Elvis Costello, Bare Naked Ladies, Clannad

If you had the power of the Beyonder...

I'd restore the comic book industry to what it was five years ago—when it was normal, when it wasn't too big and it wasn't too small. W

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